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Metal Mail

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REUNIONS

Isn't it interesting that one of the most important trends in rock and roll over the last year has been the reunions of famous bands. First you had Heaven And Hell, which reunited the Black Sabbath lineup of the early '80s. Then you had the on-and-off return of Rage Against The Machine. Then came the reunion of Van Halen with David Lee Roth. Throw in for good measure a lot of talk about a possible Soundgarden return in 2008, and I'd say that there's a definite pattern forming here. Bryan

Oklahoma City, OK

Let me get this straight... Van Halen's "original lineup" reunion features David Lee Roth but *not* Michael Anthony. Hmm... that makes about as much sense as having a 16 year-old bassist who wasn't even a glimmer in his daddy's eye



Van Halen: The real thing?



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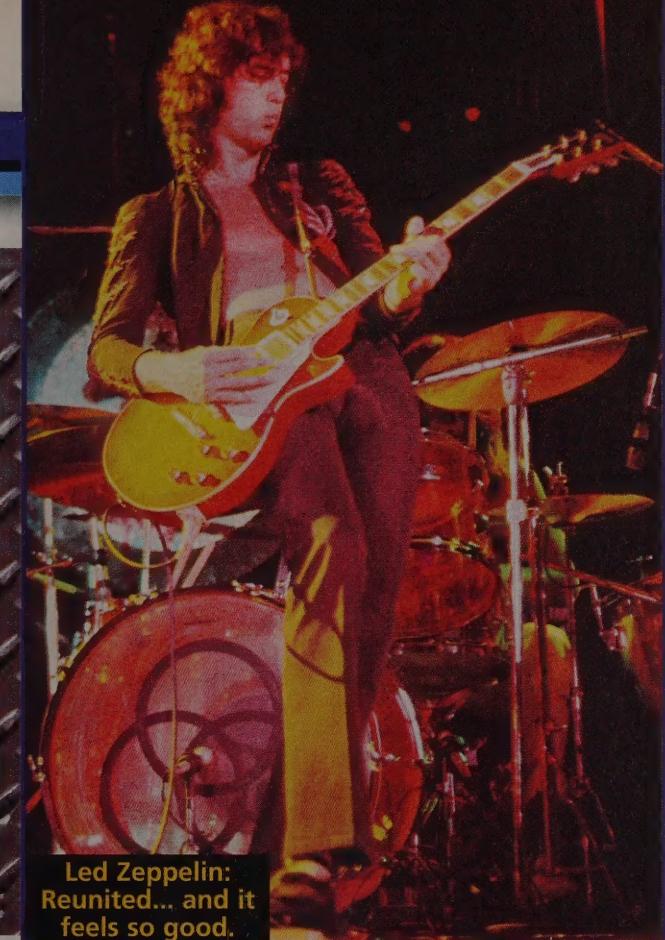
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Led Zeppelin:
Reunited... and it
feels so good.

when VH first rose to fame now in the band. Michael Anthony has always been Van Halen's "secret weapon", and his distinctive background vocals were missed more than ever when you heard Diamond Dave's on-stage caterwauling during the band's recent tour.

Mike
Baltimore, MD

I keep hearing rumors that Led Zeppelin wants to *finally* get back together for one final tour, before it's too late. I mean it's been 40 years (!!) since their first album came out. Does anybody still care? They were a great band, but I don't have any interest in seeing a bunch of old geezers get on stage and go through the motions of being Rock Gods.

Ian
London, England

I do hope that after they finish touring Heaven And Hell decide to make a new album. I know that Ronnie James Dio wants to resume his solo career, and that there's talk about an "original" Sabbath album—with Ozzy. But I think all those things should take a major back seat to a new H&H album. It would rock my world.

John
Cleveland, OH

NEW FACES OF METAL

Sometimes it seems to me like **Hit Parader** spends too much time on "old" heavy metal bands like Korn, Metallica, Megadeth and Ozzy rather than on the new stars of today. I think it's vital that you focus more attention on exciting bands like H.I.M. and 3 Inches of Blood—groups that



Now, years in the making, Lizzy Borden pulls back the cloak to unveil his latest and most frightening creation, *Appointment with Death*, a fatalistic journey to the final destination damned by the wings of death. This highly anticipated release features guest appearances by George Lynch of Dokken/Lynch mob, Y&T frontman Dave Meniketti, Erik Rutan of Hate Eternal/ex-Morbid Angel, and Trivium guitarist Corey Beaulieu.

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Metal Mail

seem to have the future of hard rock in their control.

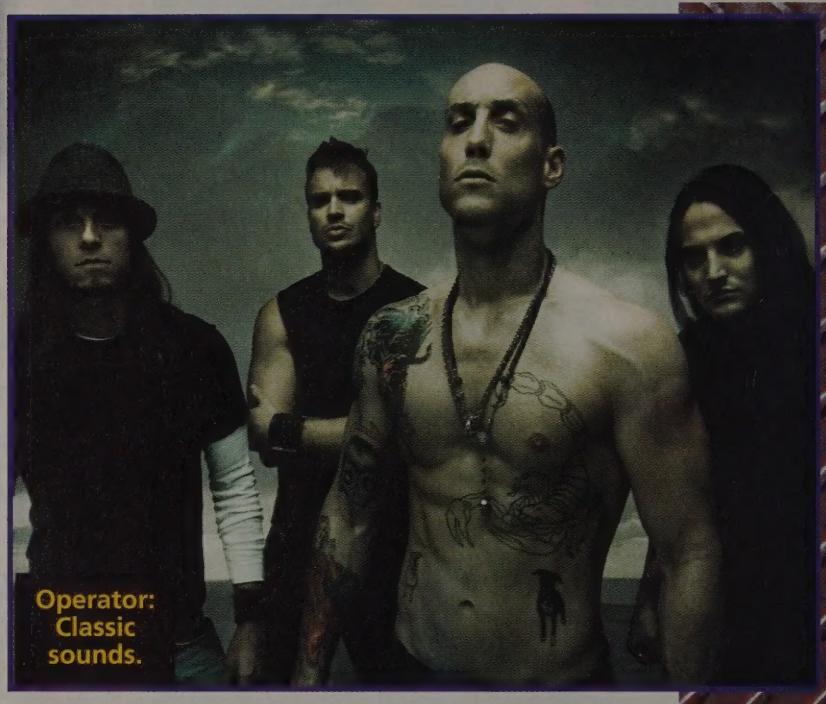
B.J.
Madison, WI

Thanks for the recent articles on Daath. I picked up their album because of your interview with them, and I really liked it. They're very cerebral—not just bashing away at their instruments—yet they're also very heavy. I also really liked the new Bleeding Through album. I recommend it to everyone.

Tom
Houston, TX

I happened to hear the song *Soulcrusher* by Operator on my local radio station, and I thought I'd actually download it. Then I started downloading some of the other tracks from their album. Soon I discovered that I had downloaded the entire album. It's really good, though I like the heavier songs a bit more than the moody ones.

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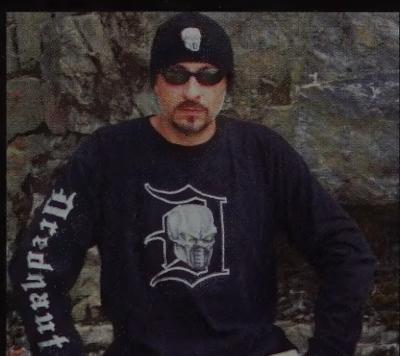
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POEMS/LYRICS

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Tucson, AZ

What's it say about the current state of hard rock when great bands like Slayer and Marilyn Manson have to tour together in order to sell tickets? That's great for the fans, but I can remember a time not that many years ago when *each* of those groups could have filled arenas on their own. Does that mean that there are fewer fans for good hard rock music? Or does it just mean that there are fewer people who actually care?

Donna
Oakland, CA

UGLY BANDS

As I go through the pages of **Hit Parader** I realize that today's metal bands are a lot uglier than the bands of the '80s and '90s. Is that just my imagination, or can this actually be true? Where in past years you had musicians who really seemed interested in their appearance, these days most rockers only seem to care about how many tattoos they can cram onto their decidedly out-of-shape bods.

Pam
Seattle, WA

Please, please, please... keep printing more pin-up photos of Christina Scabbia and Kat Von

D. I was happy to see Kat in your *Tattoo You* mini-mag. She is so hot! And Christina has been one of my faves ever since I saw her pic in a European rock mag about six years ago. I hear she's dating Jim Root from Slipknot. Lucky guy!

Arlo
Springfield, MA

I'm really getting tired of Jamey Jasta. The dude seems to pop up everywhere, and while he's kind'a cool, I think he should just stick to making music. Why is it that a lot of people—whether they're musicians, athletes or actors—think that other people actually want to hear their opinions on topics other than music, sports and movies? We don't care what they think about politics or the state of the world. For the most part, they're barely qualified to talk about subjects they know about.

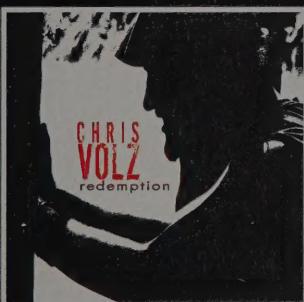
Foxy T.
Brooklyn, NY

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Billy
Little Rock, AR

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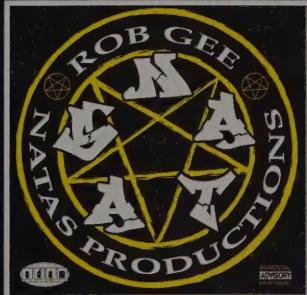


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Metal Happenings

rants, raves,
news & gossip

OZZY: So how did Ozzy Osbourne hold up to the night-in, night-out rigors of headlining this summer's *Ozzfest*? Better than the 58 year-old rocker may have originally believed. "I was a little scared of playing so many shows," he said. "Last year I only played 10 *Ozzfest* shows, so going to a much fuller schedule was very intimidating. But once the tour began all the old reflexes began to take over. I got into the rhythm of it right away. It wasn't as difficult as I thought it might be, in fact it was a lot of fun! And I am watching my health much more than I used to, so I was better prepared than ever to be up on stage and give a great show every night."

MANSON:

What's life like for Marilyn Manson these days?

Having had his most recent disc, *Eat Me, Drink Me*, make an unacceptable—if rather unspectacular—chart run, and having his recent co-headlining tour with Slayer be viewed as an artistic and commercial juggernaut, these days the wild-eyed rocker seems quite content in his own skin. "After going through a difficult time in my life, and a difficult time making this album, I'm pretty excited about things," he said. "I feel very inspired just to get out there every night and kick some serious ass."



VELVET REVOLVER: Their sophomore disc, *Libertad*, made a chart-topping debut in July. Their tour sold out theaters and arenas around the world through the remainder of 2007. So what lies ahead for Velvet Revolver? According to vocalist Scott Weiland, it's gonna be more-of-the-same for a long time to come. "We're just warming up," the singer said. "We've been playing some of the new songs for a number of months and we've grown totally comfortable with them. It's an interesting process when you're playing things that you just recorded along-side songs that you may have played for a couple of years."

AC/DC: Where-oh-where are AC/DC? It's now been well over five years since the legendary Thunder From Down Under released their last album, and reports rumbling out of both Europe and Australia aren't particularly optimistic about anything getting done any time soon. Apparently the band

BREAKING NEWS

BY LOU O'NEIL JR.

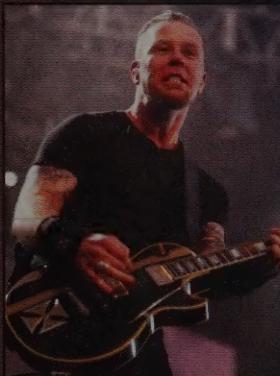
ON DEADLINE: As the days of 2007 rapidly dwindle, we ponder what will be the **HUGE** metal story in the coming year of 2008? Put a gun to your ancient scribbler's head and we'd give you a quick, one-word answer: "Metallica." Yup, after all these years, all this waiting, not to mention all this anticipation, James Hetfield and Co. are locked and loaded and according to our inside sources, actually finishing the album as you read these words. The buzz is that Metallica's new CD should drop in mid-Spring. But, before we share more inside skinny on the album, we got a real kick out of the rumor (false) that the aforementioned Hetfield had been stopped and detained at a London airport. Baloney and here's what JH emphatically told the Press.

"It's pure fabrication," quoth the driving force of one of metal's seminal superstars continuing, "There have been lots of rumors flying around saying that I was detained by airport security in London while touring Europe. And I'm here to tell you that it **never** happened. The story is that there is no story... You know, it's scary how gullible and easily fooled the Press is!"

Well, James, glad to point out we never used the "story" and are glad to help you clear-the-air. You never looked like a fanatical terrorist anyway. And, as for the CD, we hear that Matt Sorum from Velvet Revolver went ultra whack-a-ding-hoy when he heard tracks courtesy of Lars. Sorum screamed, "I yelled master this stuff and put it out! Eight-minute songs, all these tempo changes and crazy-fast. It's like, 'Dude, don't you go slower when you get older? You don't get faster do you?' I just wonder how they're gonna play this stuff live." Sorum's amazement was infectious and had your reporter salivating, dear reader. But, the killer is when Matt gushed, "They're cutting everything to tape. All live, no clicks. Bitchin' and I really dig it. I'm very excited for them!"

COMMENT: So, at least we have some idea of the direction Metallica is headed, musically speaking and our hunch is that the band is attempting to recapture the wonderful karma of their 1986 classic, "Master of Puppets." Just remember that you read it here first. More exclusive Metallica bulletins as they develop.

SECRET STUFF: Veterans of the concert scene are chuckling about that big 80's band doing a mega-reunion tour. Seems that the lead yapper, though he wrote **ALL** the songs, needs a giant TelePrompTer stage left just to remember the lyrics to his own tunes. Crazy world, ain't it?



QUICKIE QUIZ: Last month, we asked you to tell us the names of the world's most expensive and least expensive cities? Well, taking Gotham as a base, Moscow, Russia, is 34.4% more expensive to live in than the Big Apple. The least expensive city is Asuncion, Paraguay. It costs half as much to live there as New York. Yikes! We're not headed to Mother Russia anytime soon! And besides, it's cold there! This month, yeah, yeah, we'll readily agree it's a 'trick' question, but we'll pose it anyway. With one exception, rock legend Keith Richards, has had only one job his entire life, playing guitar in the Stones. Yet, this salty daredevil had his only other job last all of four days. Tell us what Keith was doing? Hmmm.

NO NAMES PLEEEZE: That metal rock star from England better mind his P's and Q's. He bolted a fancy soiree at the Alhambra in Chicago totally out-of-his-mind and toting five bottles of tequila in his poke! The only problem was that the musician had "forgotten" to pay and the total tab was more than 12K. Police were about to be summoned when the cash came out and poof!—no more problem. You can't make this stuff up!

ROCK WIRE REPORT: With Christmas fast approaching well...we'll stop right here to wish our old buddy, John (Ozzy) Osbourne a Happy Birthday. On December 3rd his Ozness will be 59. One more year Ozzy and you join a very select club... In light of his past antics, it'll be more than interesting to see how Brian ("Head") Welch's new book is reviewed. He named the tome, "How I Found God, Quit Korn, Kicked Speed And Lived To Tell The Tale." How's **that** for a title... A Hollywood angle to be sure, but who's that \$20 million-a-film star who was on the verge of a total nervous breakdown and was only pulled out of it when his lady got him a puppy. A cute little Lab. His studio was in major depression until he came around. Please we can say no more!... Alter Bridge coughed up big bucks to "buy" their way out of the deal with Windup Records. But, impeccable sources insist no Creed reunion is even being talked about.

SEE YOU NEXT MONTH: Until then, Happy Thanksgiving and remember, *Nothing in this world travels faster than a whisper!*

METAL MUSINGS

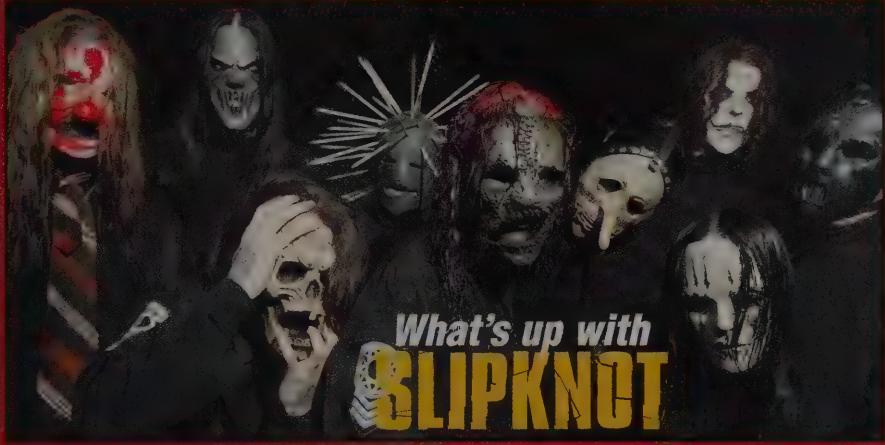
BY MIKE G

began rehearsals in Paris early in 2007, only to temporarily go their separate ways so that Angus Young and his brother Malcolm could do some more writing. Vocalist Brian Johnson returned to his Florida home to supposedly begin work on a non-rock and roll music project, and he's sitting by the phone waiting for the "call to arms" from the Young brothers.

ALTER BRIDGE: There's a rather interesting story behind Alter Bridge winding up on Universal Records for the release of their latest album, *Blackbird*. It seems the band (which as most of you know, features three of the four former members of the multi-platinum band, Creed) wanted to get out of their previous deal—with the label that released all of Creed's discs—because they believed that company was not-so-secretly hoping for a Creed reunion. Since the Alter Bridge guys knew that they weren't barking up that tree again, they wanted to get a fresh start with a company they believed was 100 percent behind their current efforts.

METALLICA: They were never known as "the fastest band on the block" when it comes to their recording practices. Yet the members of Metallica are reporting that the lengthy studio time needed to complete their latest effort went a lot smoother than some past memorable moments in the band's legendary history. "We all worked together very well," said guitarist Kirk Hammett. "There was a real sense of camaraderie, especially when it came to writing the songs. There have been times in the past when one guy or another would kind of run off and hide when it came time to write. Now a lot of it was done out in the open with everyone involved to some degree."

SLIPKNOT: It appears as if Slipknot are determined to not only get their next studio collection done in 2008, but also to hit the road in support of that disc by the end of next year, as well. Ovverambitious? Not according to drummer Joey Jordison, who recently completed his guest-drumming gig for Korn. "I think that we've all been storing up ideas for Slipknot," he said. "So when we get together it's not so much a creative process as it is an outpouring. We haven't written new stuff in over three years, and we've all grown a lot as musicians and as people since then. I think will be reflected in the music—in a crazy, unpredictable way."



What's up with SLIPKNOT

JUDAS PRIEST: So where do Judas Priest stand in the recording of their "concept disc", *Nostradamus*? According to guitarist K.K. Downing, the process has yielded such a flood of promising material that the band's most difficult task may be weeding down the songs to a manageable level. "Once we had a concept like this, there was a story to tell," he said. "That definitely motivates songwriting ideas. Often you search for subjects that motivate you. Here, they were presented quite clearly and left up to us to handle. What we've ended up with is quite overwhelming—both in terms of quality and quantity."

RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE: There seems to be one key question on the lips of hard rock fans from Tokyo to Topeka. Will Rage Against The Machine stick together? After amazing fans during a series of high profile gigs last summer, the members of this explosive unit once again went in their own directions... but this time there at least seems to be the promise of more good things in their future. "I don't know if they're going to do anything as extensive as an album, but I wouldn't be surprised if they continue to play live from time to time," said a source close to the band. "They really seem to be enjoying it."

When one has a chance to interview one of the best damn guitarists currently prowling stages across America for one of the alltime great hard rock bands, one doesn't mess with such an opportunity. For this issue's installment of "Metal Musings," we speak exclusively with Deep Purple lead guitarist Steve Morse. The band just completed a stateside tour, *Its Live At Montreux 2006* (Eagle Rock Entertainment) has just been released.

DO YOU LOOK AT YOURSELF IN THE MIRROR EACH MORNING AND SAY, "HEY DUDE, YOU ARE ONE OF THE ALLTIME GREAT GUITARISTS!"

No, [laughs], but I've been around a long time. Everybody has their talent that they're good at, y'know? The thing that I hope that I can be remembered for is really just loving music and wanting to create things that have energy and melody at the same time.

BUT YOU'RE ALL OVER THE MAP
STYLISTICALLY

I like a lot of different styles of music. That just seems natural to me. Everybody should be that way.



YOU STARTED IN THE DIXIE DREGS, WHAT WAS BEFORE THAT?

Our band was called Dixie Grit. We were kids. We thought it was funny. In the south, that was sort of a euphemism for a redneck. And none of us were actually rednecks, we were musical people [laughs] from Ohio. It was in the mid-to late-60s. None of us actually came from the south! That was another ironic thing about the name. My older brother was the drummer and we just thought it was so funny that people would hear the name Dixie Grit and think it would be a band they would like, come hear us, and then we'd be doing original stuff. Back then, doing that in the south was just not forgivable. So right away we were weird social outcasts. That band broke up because of course we couldn't survive doing that. The bass player, Andy West, and I were the only ones left who still wanted to do something even weirder. So we changed our name to The Dixie Dregs and got a drummer [Rod Morgenstein] and were a three-piece. We had tape loops, electronic music, I played keyboards besides guitar, it was all instrumental. We had this spoken section where I went back behind the amps and hooked up these two tape recorders that were 10 feet apart with a tape running from one to another and that looped back so that what was said 10 seconds ago would start being repeated through the PA. As the talk kept comin', it would turn into this barrage of sound.

I PLAYED THE HELL OUT OF THAT FIRST DIXIE DREGS ALBUM, FREE FALL, AS IT HAD HARD ROCK, JAZZ AND EVEN COUNTRY!

I love bluegrass stuff. Bluegrass is so close to European folk and dance music. It's full of energy. Same way with a lot of Bach stuff. It's metal from a

metal happenings

BY: AMY SCIARRETTO

ALL-ACCESS: Who's Doing What... and When

Former Limp Bizkit guitarist Wes Borland has resurfaced in a new band called Black Light Burns. No word on exactly what the heck his former bandmate, Fred Durst is doing these days, and, no, we're not initiating a "Bring Fred Durst Back To The Public Eye" campaign, either! We'll let that sleeping dog lie, and we're sure Durst will rear his shaved head one of these days when we least expect it... If you're a collector of action figures and a rabid KISS fan, then boy, do we have some great news for you. A Paul Stanley "Star Child" figure is being produced. The pouty-lipped, hairy-chested doll will stand 20 inches tall, and will feature Stanley's Destroyer-era costumes, using such materials as rhinestones and sequins for the most real life replication possible! Apparently, sources say this is the most life-like Paul Stanley replica doll ever. If you're interested in this fabulous piece of KISS memorabilia, point and click at www.entertainmentearth.com... San Diego's As I Lay Dying have enlisted Killswitch Engage guitarist Adam Dutkiewicz to produce their upcoming third effort for Metal Blade, which is due this Fall. As for Dutkiewicz, the guitarist/producer is almost fully recovered from back surgery that sidelined him from a few dates on KsE's winter tour... Massachusetts metalcore band Bury Your Dead have found a new singer in the form of Michael Crafter, an Australian who once fronted the coolly named I Killed The Prom Queen, who have an album out on Metal Blade right now. BYD drummer Mark Castillo had this to say about the band's new vocalist: "After weeks of practice and hanging out, we have decided that Crafter is now our new front man. He's an amazing dude and put forth a ton of effort to show us he was serious about being apart of BYD. Let the good times roll." BYD's *The Beauty And The Breakdown* is out now on Victory Records... Original Exodus drummer Tom Hunting has returned to the fold, rejoining the legendary thrash metal band.



IN THE STUDIO

Orange County's melodic metal masters Atreyu are hard at work on their next album, which follows up 2006's *A Death Grip On Yesterday*. The band, who are spending the summer of 2007 as part of the *Family Values* tour, have parted ways with longtime label, Victory Records, and have joined forces with

Hollywood Records. About the new record, vocalist Alex Varkatzas had this to say, "We're really excited

ATREYU

to be working with (producer) John Feldmann. I don't want to give anything away, but we're tossing around all kinds of ideas and are leaving ourselves open to endless possibilities. We are going to challenge ourselves." The new album is scheduled for a late summer release... Swedish melodic death metal overlords Arch Enemy are also working on new material. Drummer Daniel Erlandsson had this to say about the new effort: "It's been a very smooth ride so far. We've recorded a total of 11 new tracks, plus some other extras. The new songs sound very fresh and diverse. Some songs are faster and more extreme than before, while some songs are very heavy and melodic—but they all have the Arch Enemy imprint in capital letters." The album will be out on Century Media...



Guitarist Gary Holt checks in, saying, "It was always understood that when and if Tom was ever ready to resume drumming duties for the band, his seat would be waiting. [Interim drummer] Paul Bostaph always knew this, and was the first to say it upon joining the band. We cannot thank Paul enough for his services on *Shovel Headed Kill Machine* and all the subsequent tours he did to support the album." Exodus continue to work on new material, described as "the heaviest we've ever written." The band will hit the studio in May with producer Andy Sneap manning the boards...

Century Media Records, the LA-based label has signed a spate of new bands, among them At All Cost from Austin, Texas, as well as Suicide Silence, who hail from Riverside, CA. Congrats to both bands and the label on these new partnerships, and expect new albums in the not so distant future... Emo rockers Thursday have split with Island/Def Jam after 2 albums. The band is wrapping up its touring schedule and working on new material, and has had offers from other record labels. We're sure they'll be quickly snatched up by a label that best suits the band's needs.

See ya next month with more gossip, rumors, and tidbits.

MORE MUSINGS

different time! And bluegrass is the same way too. When you hear somebody who plays bluegrass well, I just don't believe there's a human being on the planet who can sit there, listen, and say, "big deal."

YOU RECORDED 14 ALBUMS WITH THE DREGS FROM 1975 TO 2002. YOU RECORDED 11 ALBUMS WITH THE STEVE MORSE BAND FROM 1984 TO 2005.

We had a period where everybody scattered in different directions trying to find work when the band broke up. I did some solo things and quickly gravitated to this bass player [Jerry Peek] and drummer [Doug Morgan] I had met in my travels. They were starving so we put together a trio and it just worked really well. A lot of the people who liked the Dregs' music would come to our shows. I was still writing in that same style. It wasn't too much of a surprise for Dregs fans. Of course, they knew the sound would be different without the keyboards but they supported us for many years.

YOU STEPPED INTO SOME BIG SHOES IN REPLACING THE GREAT RITCHIE BLACKMORE. WAS THERE ANY FEAR THERE?

Sure. There's no question Ritchie was a great riff-master. Maybe the best of all, along with Jimmy Page. He was a very seasoned performer too. Great soloist. All that kind of stuff. But, then again, the thing I had going for me, was that I wasn't even trying to be like him. I was coming at it from a different direction. My thing was, "I'm a fan of Deep Purple and here's what I think will sound good for you guys to play." That was my attitude. It made it easy, rather than saying, "I've got to nail Ritchie's vibe exactly," which isn't what they wanted anyway. I felt like Ritchie would always have the edge over me in terms of image and as a founding member of the band. I would never ever be able to fill his shoes. However, musically, I know I love music. I know if you throw me in with some musicians, I'm going to be able to come up with something that works with them.

THERE ARE THOSE WHO WILL VOCIFEROUSLY ARGUE THAT THE BAND WAS BEST DURING THE JON LORD/RITCHIE BLACKMORE ERA AND ANYTHING ELSE IS SACRILEGIOUS TO EVEN SPEAK OF.

I certainly can see where they're coming from. The Lord/Blackmore/Gillan/Paice/Glover lineup is the definitive Deep Purple lineup. To me, as a fan, the greatest album is still *Machine Head* [1972]. You can't go back in time. If you took everybody who was on *Machine Head* and put them in a room today, you'd get a different result. It's not the personality so much as the time, the direction, and the chemistry. I agree with the people who find that so incredible. What we got right now, given the situation, that we're in 2007, and all this stuff has happened, the things that everyone has seen and done, you have to ask, "what's the best combination that you can get to pull the best music out of everybody." If you're looking at it from that standpoint, I'd think the critics would be less likely to throw tomatoes at me.

WHAT'S YOUR EMOTIONAL, HIGH POINT OF LIVE SET?

I love "Highway Star." First of all, Roger insists that we do this improv which I absolutely love. He does something different every single night and he's proud of the fact that he makes it different every night. That's such a cool thing about Deep Purple, and a lot of that does come from Ritchie Blackmore. Ritchie and Jon Lord and Ian Gillan, all of 'em, in fact, were always big on improv and doing things different onstage, to keep it fresh.

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metal happenings

caught in the act

LINKIN PARK

Linkin Park are superstars. In case you still doubt that claim, just look at the faces of vocalist Chester Bennington, guitarist Brad Delson, vocalist Mike Shinoda, drummer Rob Bourdon, dj. Joseph Hahn and bassist Dave "Phoenix" Farrell gracing any number of recent mainstream magazine covers. Or if you're too lazy to wander down to the neighborhood convenience store, you can just sit at home and check out the band's videos filling the MTV airwaves or their hits dominating rock radio playlists. This So-Cal contingent's three studio albums, **Hybrid Theory**, **Meteora**, and **Minutes to Midnight** have sold a combined total of over 25 million copies world-wide, while their tours—including the most recent version of their own *Projekt Revolution* road outing—have packed the biggest arenas and stadiums from Tokyo to Toronto.

Yup, this West Coast sextet are Stars with a capital "S". But for whatever reason, their stellar-status still hasn't fully impacted upon their perspectives, their attitudes or their friendships—at least not in the manner it has for so many other successful bands. Somehow, despite sharing a tour bus, a stage and a crowded backstage dressing room for months-on-end, the LP pack still seem to be not only enjoying their hard-won fame, but also each other's company.

"We've shared everything that's happened to us, and that's brought us all closer together," Bennington said. "I know that success can put a wedge between some bands where egos take over and things can really take a wrong turn. But we don't even have to work on keeping our egos in check. Being able to get along with ourselves—as well as with the fans—comes naturally to us. That's something that we're very aware of when we're touring. We play bigger and bigger places, and it becomes a little harder to have the kind of direct contact with the fans that we want."

With their various *Projekt Revolution* pre-show activities

taken care of, the members of Linkin Park settled down to try and while away the final minutes before taking the stage. Those last pre-show moments seemed to move like hours for this restless rap/metal crew, but finally the time came for this trend-setting unit to step out into the spotlight. Instantly, the attention of everyone within the gathered throng (many of whom had already sat through a day's worth of music presented by the likes of My Chemical Romance and H.I.M.) was squarely cast upon the six men who dominated center stage.

Whether they were local celebrities, media movers or merely the ticket-wielding, blue collar rock and roll revelers who made up a vast majority of the crowd, they all focused in on the musical proceedings before them. They did so in order to both get into this unit's pulsating sound and attempt to get a grip on exactly why the Linkin Park brigade has unquestionably become the 21st century's most note-worthy hard rock success story.

It didn't take these interested observers long to discover exactly what the "secret" to Linkin Park's incredible success has been—a lethal combination of great songs, great play-



**"We've shared everything
that's happened to us, and that's
brought us all closer together."**

ing, and enough on-stage energy to light up Cleveland for a week! After making a relatively low-key appearance on stage, the band quickly launched into the tight, heavy, amazingly syncopated rhythms that millions of fans around the world have grown to know and love. With rocker Bennington and rapper Shinoda seamlessly sharing lead vocal duties, and the heavy-handed Delson supplying the foundational backbone of the band's sound, the LP boys tore through a crowd-pleasing set that featured such hits as *Somewhere I Belong*, *One Step Closer* and their recent smash, *What I've Done*. Clearly, it was an evening of total triumph for a band that in just seven years has managed to conquer the entire rock and roll world.

"When you can get a crowd to respond like that, it's the best feeling I know," an obviously happy Delson said shortly after the band left the stage. "Especially on a night like tonight, when for whatever reason I was a little nervous before the show, when you end up putting on a good set and getting a great response, you feel like you're on top of the world."

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metals' new stars

EVERY TIME I DIE

"The progress, for us, has always been us upping the bar with every record," says handsome Every Time I Die vocalist Keith Buckley. "It's not different. It's the most confident record we have ever written. That means it will be alienating a lot of people who won't get it, because it's hard to classify it."

Every Time I Die are one of those bands that fits in both the *Warped Tour* and *Ozzfest* worlds. They play screamy metalcore, with an emphasis on Southern fried guitar riffs, something that sets them apart from the pack.

The Southern element isn't due to the fact that ETID are from the South, simply because they *aren't* from the South. They hail from the icy environs of Buffalo, NY, but that didn't stop them from gettin' even more down and dirty on their new album, **The Big Dirty**. "The Southern influence is from growing up with my dad, who is a huge guitar enthusiast, and the best guitar sounds came from Georgia or New Orleans," says Buckley. "The classics were always being played in our house. That's the sound and the lifestyle that I admire."

The Big Dirty effectively encapsulates the ETID sound – rough, gnarly, gritty, irreverent, somewhat Southern. The title, Buckley says, comes from a movie. “It refers to the one major crime that a guy commits that makes him set for life, so he never has to commit any more crimes.” It’s quite possible that **The Big Dirty** is ETID’s own “big dirty,” and is their definitive, career-making turn

It's always been a good time party with ETID. Live, they give it their all, as if they are the guests of honor at a huge shindig. They are known for the onstage antics, which include wearing wigs and costumes, or playing sound clips in between their songs instead of interacting with the crowd. But Buckley admits that while the band still likes to rage, they've calmed down considerably. "We're older and wiser," the vocalist points out. "I think a lot of bands act like party bands as a marketing strategy, and that's really frustrating. They try to pass off humor that is offensive or not funny. We still party, but not on a large scale. We don't have to impress anyone at this point. None of us are in the back room painting with oils, either. We are just more selective with how we party and who with!"

ETID are not only rowdier than most bands; they're also smarter. Buckley's songs are full of intelligent lyrics. "No one in our genre took the piss out of themselves, so we took a big risk," he says, referring to his band's choice to go with humor. He admits that he got his sense of humor from his dad, who liked a lot of British TV shows. "There has to be things you don't like about yourself, and it's better to make fun of yourself and your flaws before anyone else does. When I make fun of myself, no one else can say anything that I already don't know and I haven't said."



BEHEMOTH

1000 Gold Coins Of Earth were considered the Gold Standard in Black Metal. (Or maybe that's the "Black Standard"? But I'm not intended!)

Recently, though, the Black Metal party has been crashed by Behemoth, thanks to their masterful *Worship at the Gate*. And this Polish band doesn't necessarily confine themselves to a single genre, as *Worship at the Gate* shows. "We aren't black. We aren't death. We're beyond that. We're

Sounds like a guy who understands what his band is doing, and what it means to the metal scene. Behemoth take the stage, slathered in panda-like corpse paint, and they are about the side of

"I would say Behemoth is a visual band," contends Nergal, who also writes for the Polish magazine *Mystic Art*. "The whole theatrical side is important. We started in 1992, and we used masks and corpse paint, in order to express an inner feeling. I would gather that it's not possible to express it without this mask. We had a show where we were forced to go on stage, and had no time to put the gear and make up on, and I felt so out of it. My moves, gestures and faces were not the same. It was different, like I was a different person performing. Without the make up, we're just regular people and we don't play regular, happy music. We play dangerous, disturbing metal and need to look the part."

On The Apostasy, which Nergal describes as diverse, fast, barbare, and majestic, Behemoth have gone all out, and will be the successors to the Cradle Of Filth/Dimmu

Borgir throne. "The new record is very courageous," Nergal says with conviction. "We just did so many new things and we refreshed the formula. We had a choir singing on this record, and trumpets, French horns, and guests like Warrel Dane from Nevermore."

It's obvious that Behemoth have a 'kill or be killed' approach to their music. "This band treats things, like studio work, a new album, a tour, or a live performance, as if our lives depended on it. We're not just here for rock and roll or entertainment. Yes, that's important and we like to entertain ourselves and those who watch us, but on the other hand, it's very serious," Nergal finishes.

DIVINE HERESY

Divine Heresy is Dino Cazares' first full-time band since he left Fear Factory. While he has been enjoying his Latin side projects Asesino and Brujeria, which often tour South America, he knew he had to eventually make a comeback to the metal scene, and he knew he had to come back with something brutal. And he has.

First things first, he's totally moved on from Fear Factory, the cyber metal band that was one of the first to fuse clean and demonic vocals, and he's no longer in touch with his former bandmates. He's also adamant that there will never be a reunion with him in the band.

COMIN' AT YOU

SAME QUESTION, DIFFERENT BANDS

Moving forward. That's what Cazares is about. And he's moving forward with Divine Heresy.

"In 2002, I was trying to assemble a band and I was getting frustrated, because I could not find the right guys, and I was playing with mediocre musicians," Cazares admits. After many stops and starts, and the time he took to be one of the songwriting captains for the Roadrunner United 25th Anniversary project, he recruited drummer Tim Yeung, who played with Vital Remains and Hate Eternal, and vocalist Tommy Vext, a relative unknown. "Since I was coming out of Fear Factory, which had a great drummer and a good singer, I knew I had to find musicians to top that. And I think I did," the guitarist humbly admits.

Divine Heresy's Century Media debut, **Bleed The Fifth**, certainly sounds a lot like **Manufacture**-era Fear Factory, and it's clear that Cazares was the main songwriter in that band. But this time out, Cazares chose not to be conceptual and cyber-style, like his former outfit.

"I wanted it more raw and more metal," says Cazares, who played all bass and guitar on the album. "Tommy is very raw, and I like that. We had to put a lot of effects on the vocals in my other band. We didn't have that alone makes it sound different, since it sounds beautiful the way it is." He also contends that Yeung's brutal drumming style helped elevate his own playing. "I cannot write pop songs with that drummer," he laughs. "He was able to help me take my playing to a whole new level of speed and technicality."

Cazares chose to manufacture a band, and return to the extreme music scene purposefully, as well. He didn't want to fade away, and for a very good reason. Not only is he too iconic and talented to just go away, his Hispanic roots spurred him on. "Growing up, I was forced to go to church and Sunday school, and at



that age, you want to rebel and the most rebellious thing to do is play brutal music. I was a rebel, and wanted to have long hair, drink beer, and play guitar. I had a day job, and I loved going home and jamming to Slayer records. I still love brutal music, and I am passionate about it, and it's from my heart."

FIVE FINGER DEATH PUNCH

Five Finger Death Punch, who play deliciously aggro rock, were rather quickly plucked from relative obscurity and on to the headlining slot on the second stage of Korn's most recent *Family Values* tour. How did the band get from A to B? Through a

enjoying some time off from "the politics of the music business" when his future bandmates hunted him down via MySpace and flew him out to hear their stuff. "I sat on the songs for a month, and then I went out there to LA, went to the studio and it was Shangri La. I wanted to be involved in the first place. It was no politics and no hits; it was just from our hearts. It was a bunch of perfect fits."

5FDP took their name from the movie, *Kill Bill 2*, and it has come to have a much more specific meaning that signifies the band's existence, about how all five members contribute something to the pot. Or in this case, the fist.

Musically, on their debut, **The Way Of The Fist**, 5FDP are connecting with the kids on a real, emotional level. "I get kids coming up to me all the time," Ivan admits. "I recently just found out where my real father is. I haven't met him yet. I haven't decided if I am going to meet him. But I like to incorporate the personal stuff into the music. Honesty drives the music. That's the best word for it. We didn't intend on making a radio hit or doing something everyone else was doing. We just do what's from our hearts. My favorite song on the record is *Beat The Monster*, and it's the last track. I wrote about facing my own demons from Motograter. For the longest time, I

didn't want to sing anymore. That song speaks volumes about taking off the façade, and being myself, whether people like it or not. And the music happens to be absolutely dominating, too. Each member has a unique background. I can see anyone getting in to what we offer. We have tried to cover the spectrum. We wanted both the screaming and the melodies. I think anyone can get into us."



little of fashioned elbow grease

"We busted our asses, to be honest," says vocalist Ivan Moody, who got his start singing in the now-defunct band Motograter. "We hashed out everything for a few years, and put the right people around us."

Having already navigated the rough waters of the music biz with his previous band, the singer was

We got so many great responses from rockers about their favorite song of their own that we decided to make that question the focus of this month's *Coming At You* column again! A reprise, if you will!

DINO CAZARES

Divine Heresy

When you have a storied metal career like guitarist Dino Cazares, you can bet it's damn hard to select a song that is closest to your heart. "I have so many songs over my career and I love all my kids. I support my kids," laughs Cazares, the former guitarist of Fear Factory and current guitarist for Divine Heresy. "I'd have to say that *Scapegoat* from the first Fear Factory album, **Soul Of A New Machine**, is my favorite. The lyrics are about racism happening towards me, as a Mexican."



LA. There was a case of mistaken identity, and I got busted for something. I didn't do, I was a scapegoat. I wasn't found guilty of the crime, but I still went through the system for something I did not do. It was personal to me. A lot of Hispanics in LA are still going through the same thing with border politics. Racism occurs, even when you don't hear about it."

CHRIS BIANCHI

Forever In Terror

Metal Blade newbies Forever In Terror just released **Restless In The Tides**, and vocalist Chris Bianchi invites you to check out his favorite of his Ohio-based band's songs at the group's MySpace page, which can be found at www.myspace.com/fitmetal.

(<http://www.myspace.com/fitmetal>). "The Chosen One is my favorite of our songs," says Bianchi. "I love that song because it has all the elements that I really love. It has the nice catchy guitar riffs that make you want to bang your head. It also has an awesome guitar solo, slamming drums, good singing, and some key changes to top it off. I really love jamming on that song live; it gives me goose bumps to see some kids starting to know the words and singing along. It's the most incredible feeling in the world!"

DIRK VERBEUREN

Scars

French metal band Scars pound your ears with stop-start riffs and heavy artillery beats. Drummer Dirk Verbeuren loves the song *Rebirth*, which closes the band's new album, **The Undercurrent**.



COMIN' AT YOU SAME QUESTION, DIFFERENT BANDS

"In a way, the title of that track says it all," says Verbeuren. "In the past year, there have been a lot of important changes for Scarve, ringing in a whole new era. I believe *Rebirth* is one of the most original songs we've ever recorded. It's very groove-laden and intricate, conveying an atmosphere that's soothing and menacing at the same time. Sylvain wrote this song, and in my opinion his guitar work here is truly outstanding. I love playing those groovy rhythms; they're intense and technical without the 'no speed limit' factor of most of our other songs. It's an aspect of my drumming I don't usually get to express in Scarve. Lawrence Mackrory did a masterful job on vocals, really bringing the track to completion. He also co-wrote the lyrics with me."

Furthering expanding on the song, Verbeuren philosophically points out the song's overall positive nature, saying, "Rebirth is about dealing with missteps and facing your inner darkness. It's a positive song, because it calls for power and determination to grow as a human being. This notion of growth is very important to me, both on a personal level and as a musician. It's easy to rely on your knowledge and habits, but you must evolve in order to make it through life. Scarve has always been about evolving creatively and I'm sure the future will bring a lot of exciting and challenging music from the band!"

JOHN PETTIBONE

Himsa

Himsa's Century Media debut, *Summon In Thunder*, has just been unleashed upon the world, and it's a devastating blend of moshy riffs and hellbent, bloodcurdling screams. So



it makes sense that vocalist John Pettibone is in love with the song *Big Timber*, which is the third track on the album. "It has this punk drive to it, and it hits right home at how I feel in today's music scene," the heavily tattooed vocalist says. "It's about finding new inspirations in the darkest of places. There is so much great music that you do not know about and I'm not telling!" Ah, Mr. Pettibone is being coy, but fear not, loyal *Hit Parader* readers. That's what we are here for: to expose you to all the great music you don't yet know about, and we're starting with Himsa's *Summon In Thunder*.

the edge

PICK HIT—CIRCUS DIABLO

The name of the band Circus Diablo may not be instantly familiar to many of you reading this. But the names of the musicians participating in this exciting new hard rock unit certainly will be. Featuring past and present members of such renowned units as the Cult (guitarist Billy Duffy), Fuel (bassist Brett Scallions) and Velvet Revolver (drummer Matt Sorum), this self-styled supergroup—which also features vocalist Billy Morrison (known best for his work with Camp Freddy) and guitarist Ricky Warwick (of the Almighty)—delivers just what you might expect in terms of high-octane, no-holds-barred rock and roll dynamite. And as heard throughout this unit's self-titled debut disc,



Circus Diablo is one band that doesn't believe in following any preordained rock and roll "rules" ... and wouldn't follow 'em even if they were supposed to.

"Ours is kind of a simple story," Morrison said. "We got together to jam, turned the amps up as loud as they would go, I stuck my face up

to the mic, and what came out was the music of Circus Diablo. It wasn't overly planned—it just rather came to together on its own. When you think about it, that's the way the best music is made. It's vital, it's raw and it's exciting. At first it was just friends who got together to have fun.

But then we decided to record what we were up to. These are the results of that experiment."

Formed when English expatriates Morrison, Duffy and Warwick gathered together to jam one day in Morrison's garage, Circus Diablo soon started to develop a life all its own. After an intense three-day-long writing stint, the fledgling unit decided to record their efforts—in the process, bringing in Duffy's old Cult crony Sorum on drums and former Fuel vocalist Scallions on bass. The results, as showcased on such tracks as *Loaded*, *So Fine* and *Red Sun Rising*, reveal a band totally in love with the inherent power and majesty of great rock and roll. And while they've since had to replace Sorum (who, as you may know, is mighty busy these days with Velvet Revolver) with former Slant skin-basher Charles Ruggerio, as they hit the tour trail—most notably at this summer's *Ozzfest* "Freefest"—it seems like nothing in this world is about to stop these well-traveled Circus "freaks" from laying down their blistering brand of hard rockin' dynamite.

"It's great that so many people have now had the chance to join Circus Diablo and follow the blind leading the blind into some gloriously blinding light," Morrison said. "To be honest, it's all a bit more than any of us might have expected."

SHOOTING STARS—DEEPFIELD

Deepfield are clearly one of those "new generation" of hard rock bands that doesn't seem to be intimidated by the notion of challenging the followers at every turn. No, it's not that this South Carolina-bred quartet go out of their way to antagonize or annoy. It's just that vocalist/guitarist Baxter Teal, drummer Russell Lee, guitarist J. King and bassist/vocalist Dawson Huss have never shied away of tackling controversial issues in their lyrics—especially on songs like *Wayside* and *Fall Apart*—or asking their fans to actually think about the world that's spinning around them. In fact, it is this rather expansive musical perspective that first led this ambitious crew to select their somewhat unusual name. It draws direct reference to the outer limits of the known universe—as seen through the Hubble telescope—and makes the band members ponder the ultimate question... what the heck are we all doing here?

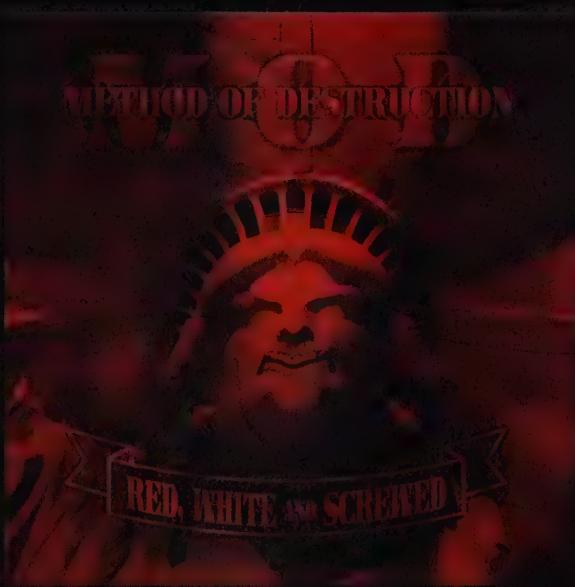
"There's nothing wrong with making people think," Teal said. "That's especially true in today's music. At times it seems as if things have become so watered-down, and designed to appeal to the mainstream, that there's very little substance. That's something that we'd like to change, if possible. We have songs that do challenge you on a number of levels, but we have total confidence that rock fans will respond to what we're doing... and they'll enjoy it."

Teal and his cohorts began developing their rather unusual attitude toward the rock and roll craft early on. After growing tired of the tepid and predictable nature of the music scene in and around their home town of Charleston, they began a musical odyssey that saw them first venture to New York—where a showcase gig quickly landed them a recording contract—and then on to Memphis, where they recorded the contents of their debut disc. If anything, the sojourn only heightened the band's awareness of contemporary music's dire need for bands that are willing to break the proverbial mold, something the members of Deepfield seem quite content to do with every note they play and every word they sing.

"We know the chances of us really changing the path of rock and roll aren't very good," Teal said. "So I can't say doing that has become a priority for us. But what we'd like to be is some sort of catalyst for change. If we can get that ball rolling ever-so-slightly, then I think we'll have accomplished our goal... and probably had a heck of a good time in the process."

M.O.D.

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Collision Course

HP reviews the latest CDs & DVDs

Each month we like to put two of our top **Hit Parader** staffers in a room with a stack of new releases. Sometimes they agree on the quality of these recent arrivals—more often, they don't. Either way, we call this exercise in musical futility **Collision Course**.

ATREYU, **LEAD SAILS PAPER ANCHOR**

As shown throughout their major label debut, **Lead Sails Paper Anchor**, while Atreyu have managed to create the boldest, brashest most genre-bending collection of their career. Odes like *Can't Happen Here* represent the band at their metallic best—a rip-roaring rocker filled with vivid images of war as well as a hook big enough to land a whale. But it's not the "traditional" tunes like *Honor* and *Becoming the Bull* that really make this disc stand out. Rather, it's the unexpected twists-and-turns the band takes along their rock and roll highway, which include the country-stomp feel of *Lead Sails (And a Paper Anchor)* and the silicon-click homage to the well-documented excesses enjoyed by '80s supergroups like Motley Crue which characterize *Blow*. This is the disc that proves that after a decade of trying, this So-Cal unit has finally come of age.

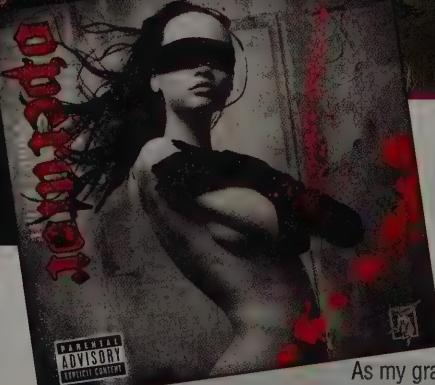
GRADE: B+

Atreyu's growth is apparent throughout **Lead Sails Paper Anchor**. From Alex Verkatzas' greatly expanded singing style to the far-reaching rock and roll vocabulary from which the band draws its primary inspiration, this may well be the disc that puts this band at the top of hard rock's 21st Century pecking order. Since its release in the summer (which was followed up by the band's headline-grabbing run at *Ozzfest*), the album has already sold over 250,000 copies, rocketing this quintet to the kind of prominence they've long sought. And while their unpredictable approach to the rock and roll craft has once again served as a lightning rod for some within the hard rock community, the yin/yang reaction Atreyu's music has created among members of metal's cutting edge has helped make their latest disc one of the year's most talked-about collections.

GRADE: B+

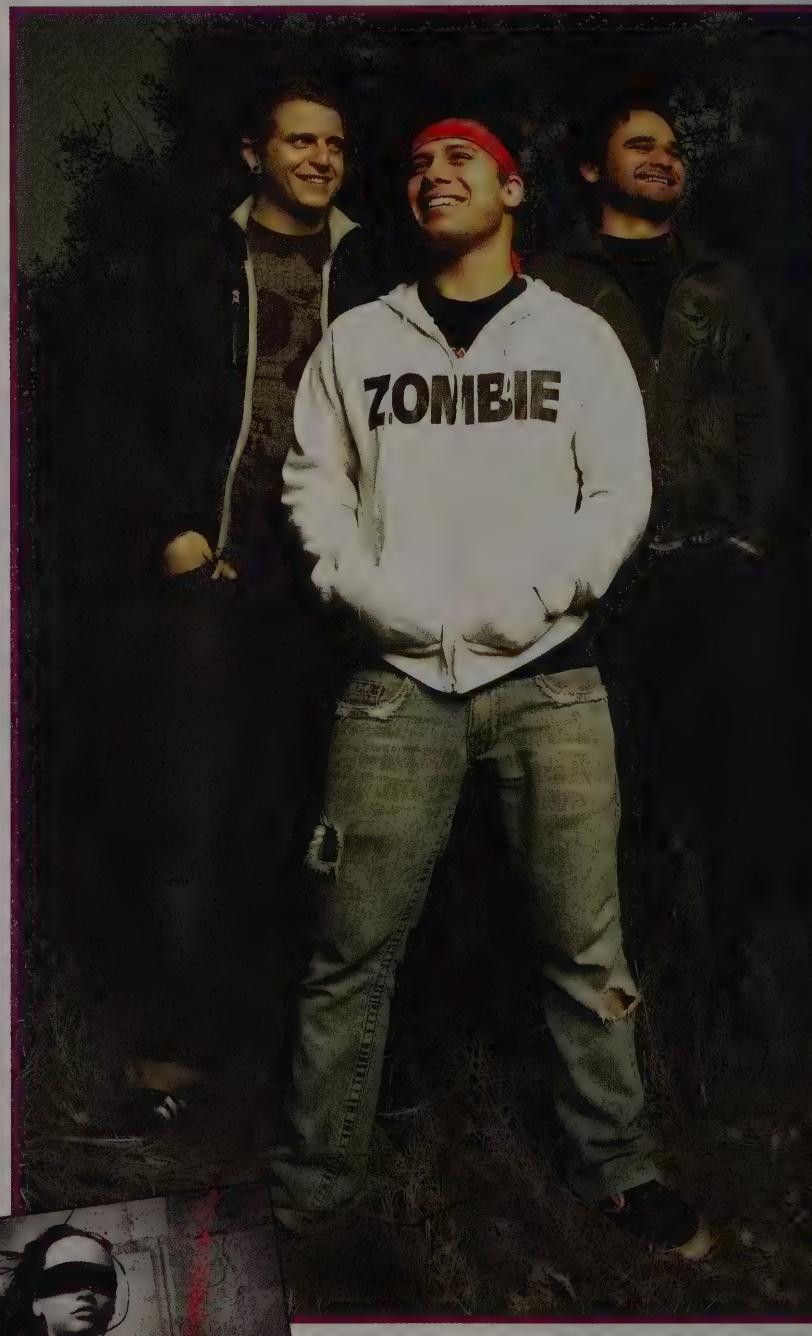
OPERATOR, **SOUL CRUSHER**

Rock and roll is dead. You hear it being said everywhere. Yeah... sure. If you have even the slightest doubt concerning the on-going viability of the hard rock form just check out **Soul Crusher**, the debut disc by Operator, and then report back to us. From



PARENTAL
ADVISORY
EXPLICIT LYRICS

As my grandmother would say, "Oy"! I guess by now I've come to the realization that there are certain things in rock and roll that will simply never go away. The kind of music presented by Operator is one of them. Utilizing



start to finish this thing snarls like a caged tiger and purrs like a Lamborghini in fifth gear. Try to imagine a slightly-watered-down version of prime-time *Guns N' Roses* with a Chris Cornell sound-alike handling the vocals. And on top of all that, this LA-based quartet manage to construct hook-laden tunes that never sacrifice their heavy-gauge artillery power no matter how commercial they may sound. Good stuff!

GRADE: A-

ALTER BRIDGE, *BLACKBIRD*

It's really not overly surprising that the rock world looked somewhat askance at Alter Bridge when this band first hit the scene back in 2004. After all, three of this unit's four members had been former members of the multi-platinum (and critically scorned) group Creed, which instantly served to make the world's Rock Radar sit up and take notice. But it quickly turned out that rather than following the pompous, overbearing path enjoyed by Creed, Alter Bridge was going to follow a pompous, overbearing path all their own. Oh... we jest. Fact was their first disc delivered a series of accessible, if somewhat overwrought hard rockers—and that disc two, *Blackbird*, follows a strikingly similar path. With guitarist Mark Tremonti laying down the heavy-handed—yet highly commercial—riffs, this is a set geared to appeal to those whose hard rock ideals remain stuck in the "predictable" lane.

GRADE: B-

You mean these guys are actually putting out a *second* album? To be honest, I was quite surprised about how much I liked Alter Bridge's first album—and I'm even more surprised that I like this one just as much. There is an undeniably infectious quality to this unit's music... even when they're rocking out as hard as they can. In some ways this stuff is like a child-proof room; no matter how "edgy" and "cutting" Alter Bridge try to sound, there's really nothing there that's gonna do you any serious harm.

GRADE: B

DOWN, *OVER THE UNDER*

Many within the metal world were more-than-slightly curious to hear how Down's first album in nearly five years would sound—especially with many of this all-star unit's key performers now professing to be clean and sober for the first time in a *long* time. Well, to be honest, one would be hard pressed to hear a marked difference in the down-n-dirty style presented by these vintage hard rockers. Vocalist Philip Anselmo still growls like a bear on the prowl, and guitarist Pepper Keenan fills each song with a heavy-handed groove. Though in recent years the hard rock world has moved on a bit from the grass roots style that Down employs so skillfully, there's no doubt that there's still a large and voracious audience for just this brand of pedal-to-the-metal fury.

GRADE: B

Ahhh... this is more like it. Sure, here's another bunch of dudes whose combined rock and roll experience is probably close to 100 years, but there's an edge to *Over The Under* that marks it as something important—and something relevant to today's metal scene. I do find listening to Phil Anselmo do his thing here to be particularly moving—basically because I hadn't thought about Pantera in a while, and hearing him again only reminds me of what a great loss that band was. But that's not to compare Down to Pantera, Corrosion of Conformity or anyone else. These guys have created a Southern-fried legacy all their own, and this disc adds another exciting chapter to that story.

GRADE: A-

SMASHING PUMPKINS, *ZEITGEIST*

Smashing Pumpkins' guitarist, vocalist, guiding light, Billy Corgan, has long been one of the more confounding personalities in the hard rock world. Often viewed by many as a whining "sheep" in metallic clothing, his work has found great support among the more elitist members of the rock and roll world—while frequently falling on deaf ears among those who recognize Corgan and Smashing Pumpkins for what they *truly* are. Once again on *Zeitgeist*—which stands as the SP's return to the music scene after a lengthy absence—the searing guitars and heavy riffs do little to disguise the fact that a vast majority of this material is more alternative rant than hard rock rage. And while that approach will undoubtedly find its audience, it remains a far cry from the kind of hard rock that most of us crave. Indeed, it is fine for what it is... but in the end, it is perhaps more notable for what it is not.

GRADE: C+

I've always had a major soft spot for the Smashing Pumpkins. Okay... go ahead... shoot me! In fact, I missed the band a great deal during their seven year hibernation. But now Billy Corgan is back in fine form with *Zeitgeist*, a classic slice of this unit's powerful, yet eminently edgy hard rock style. I totally understand those who dismiss the Pumpkins as the kind of hard rock band geared exclusively for the college set. But the undeniable fact is that Corgan can write some brilliant tunes, and the band can deliver them with style and power. What more could you want?

GRADE: B+

ATREYU

sounds and concepts that were probably dated when the likes of Zeppelin first came along, this band—fronted by the charismatic Johnny Strong—manages to act and sound like they practically *invented* this stuff. On songs like *Nothing to Lose* and *Soul Crusher*, Operator manage to present a modernized blend of grunge-meets-metal—a style that bands like Soundgarden and Guns N' Roses have done with more flair and finesse in bygone years. But since we're already comparing these guys to some of the best bands of the last two decades, maybe they're doing something right after all.

GRADE: B-

Hit Parader Salutes The '70s 1970-1979 British Legends

BLACK SABBATH THE HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPS

Few bands were ever critically lambasted, culturally ridiculed and commercially ostracized with quite the same degree of intensity as Black Sabbath upon their rock scene arrival in 1970. At a time when Beatlemania was still the dominant force in the music world, and the soft winds of the Summer of Love were still blowing strong, a band with the dire look, sound and style of these four lumbering behemoths from the decidedly un-hip English industrial town of Birmingham was about as welcome as a turd in the punch bowl.

But, the fact of the matter was that guitarist Tony Iommi, vocalist Ozzy Osbourne, bassist Geezer Butler and drummer Bill Ward really didn't give a flying flip about what the rest of the rock and roll world thought of them. Heck, in the substance-induced haze that often characterized their early days, they probably weren't even aware that they were the subject of so much criticism and derision. However, a funny thing happened shortly after the release of their self-titled debut album: a generation of angry, frustrated kids—most of whom were sick-to-death of the hippie-style trappings of the era and the fake good-time vibe that characterized so much of

BACKGROUND PHOTO BY ISTOCK.COM

that time's music—turned Black Sabbath into rock's first "underground" superstars.

Their music was unlike anything anyone had heard before—loud, dark and cumbersome, with ear-blasting riffs, slightly-satanic lyrical imagery and song titles drawn straight from Grade-B Hollywood horror flicks. Nobody knew it at the time, but through Sabbath's initial efforts, the first salvos of true heavy metal thunder had been issued, and those rough-n-ready sounds were about to start a musical revolution that would literally and figuratively rock the world to its very core.

"We were rather innocent about it all," Iommi said. "We were just four lads from a blue collar, working class environment who had an interest in the occult and horror movies. Originally we had called ourselves Earth, and were content to play rather conventional music."

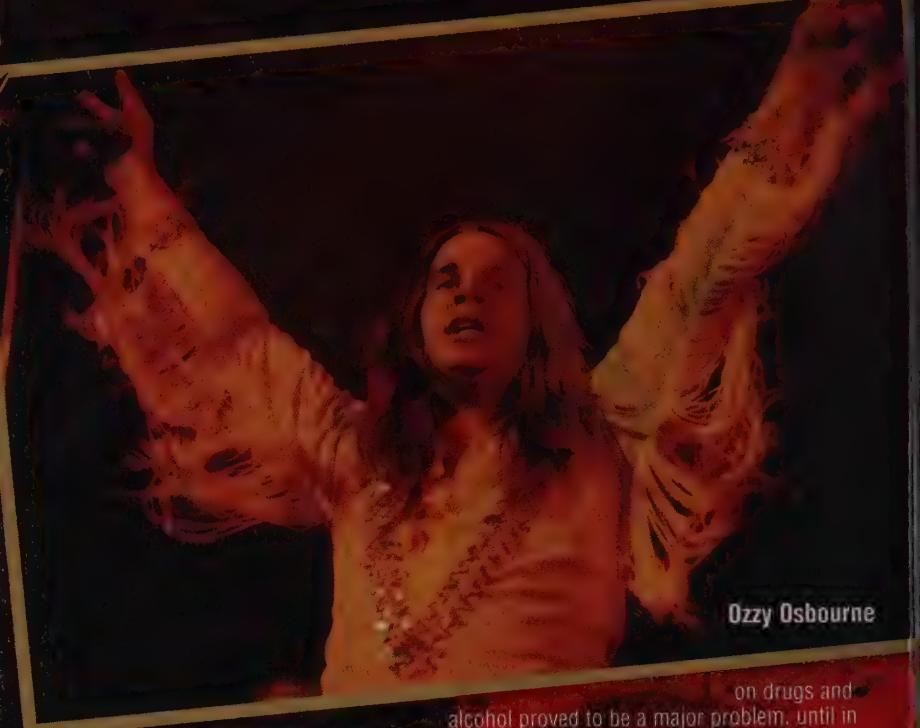
But once Geezer came to us with the name Black Sabbath—which he had picked up from an old Boris Karloff film—everything seemed to just fall into place."

The Sabs went on to rule of '70s metal scene, emitting a foundational heaviness that such contemporaries as Led Zeppelin and Deep Purple could never hope to match. It was a heady ride, with the ever-tempestuous Iommi/Osbourne relationship threatening to break the band asunder at any given moment. Still, throughout the decade Black Sabbath prevailed, cranking out a series of chart-topping albums like *Paranoid* and *Master of Reality* that cemented their rep as the heaviest band in the world. Yet, as their fame grew, and the scope of their tours continued to expand, so did the group's internal problems. Throughout the '70s Ozzy's growing dependence

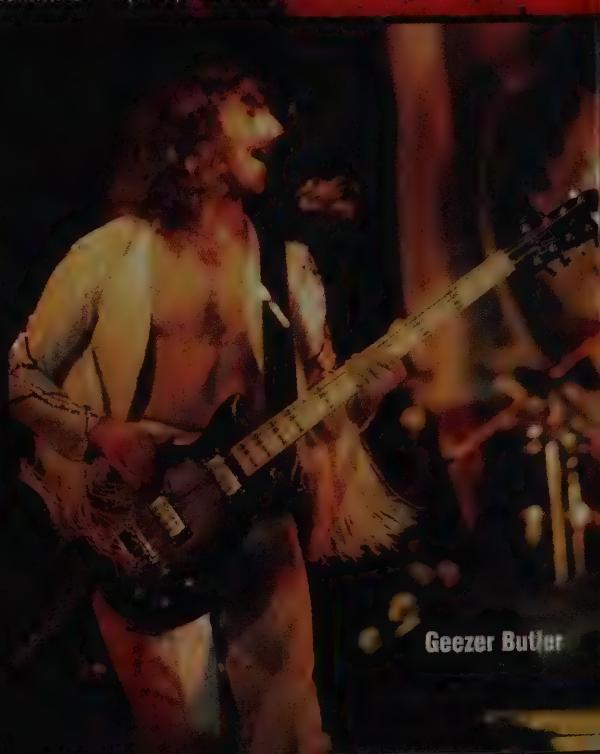
on drugs and alcohol proved to be a major problem, until in 1979—following a disastrous American tour where a young and hungry Van Halen blew them off the stage every night—Osbourne was summarily fired by a fed-up Iommi.

"I think it was best for Ozzy as well as for the band," a source said. "He couldn't really function at that point, and he was holding the band back. Tony knew what had to be done... and he did it."

With that as the historical backdrop, it was quite understandable that when the original Black Sabbath lineup rather miraculously returned to the rock world in the late '90s, a number of major questions quickly ensued. Did a generation of fans weaned on the angst-filled sounds of Disturbed, Korn and Staind really give a damn about this legendary heavy metal force? Did fans with little sense of metal history, and perhaps even less sense of musical greatness,



Ozzy Osbourne



Geezer Butler



Tony Iommi

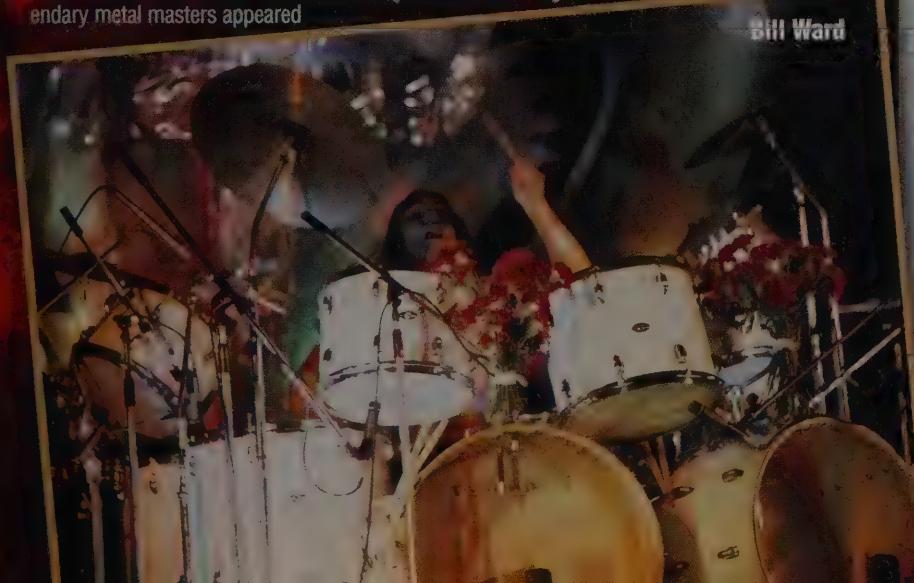
"WE WERE JUST FOUR LADS FROM A BLUE COLLAR, WORKING CLASS ENVIRONMENT WHO HAD AN INTEREST IN THE OCCULT AND HORROR MOVIES."

truly understand the importance of these hallowed Princes of Darkness? Could the Slipknot-loving teen-aged masses who comprised a vast majority of the hard rock community actually relate to a bunch of rockers old enough to be their dads... or granddads? Well, as we all quickly found out, the answer was a resounding YES!

As proven by their remarkable 21st Century success on the tour trail—where these legendary metal masters appeared

in front of over two million of their frenzied followers—these unmatched masters of the Power Riff still had what it took to make the metal minions respond with passion. So what if they no longer exuded the devil-may-care attitude that made such quintessential '70s hits as *Iron Man* and *Paranoid* foundational blocks in the Metal Hall of Fame? Upon their reuniting

Bill Ward

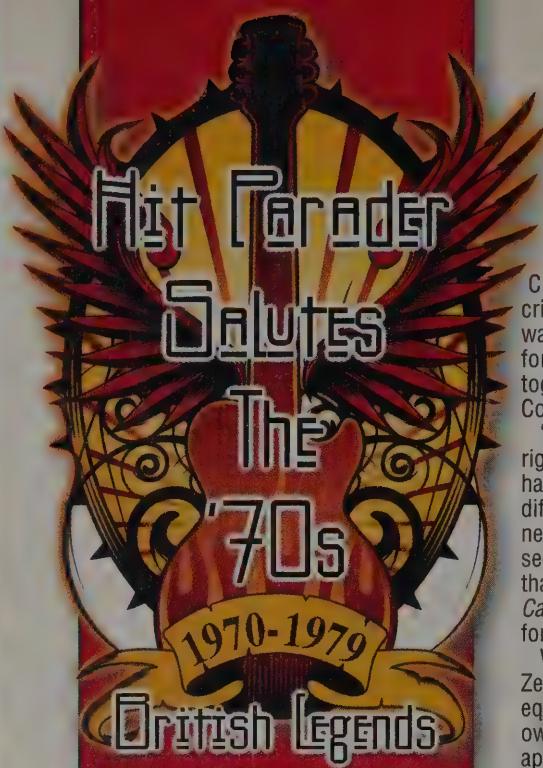


after nearly a two decade separation, these time-tested British veterans had something even more important at their disposal—the smarts, the knowledge, the talent and perhaps significantly, the desire to create the kind of hard rock music that most younger acts could only dream of creating.

"I don't think there is anything that can replace experience," Iommi said with a slightly sinister grin. "And we certainly have plenty of that. We've known each other for more than 30 years, and there are times when we seem to just instantly know what each other is thinking—especially when it comes to music. You can't buy that kind of feeling. It only comes over the course of time."

The ability of Black Sabbath to allow a new generation of fans to taste their slightly demonized brand of metal came at a particularly significant time in hard rock history—a point where the form was clearly beginning to lose its focus and drive. But the return of Sabbath seemed to inspire a new generation of bands to pick up their guitars and turn their amps on-high, in the process continuing metallic traditions as old as the form itself. Iommi, in particular, especially enjoyed this Sabbath re-birth. After years of bickering with Ozzy, and after decades virtually single-handedly keeping the band alive—if not always well—he, more than anyone, had become appreciative of the myriad opportunities that had rather suddenly come the Sabs' way.

"Certainly five years ago, this would all have been little more than a dream to me," the guitarist said at the time. "I may have always hoped that we would all get together again, but I didn't really know if it could happen. But I guess we are proof that miracles can—and do—happen."



BAD COMPANY

STRAIGHT SHOOTERS

If ever there was a band designed to take maximum advantage of the Arena Rock ethic that came to life in the '70s, then Bad Company was it. Featuring an array of immensely talented musicians, all of whom had already paid their share of heavy musical dues prior to forming this star-studded unit, Bad Co. was a band created expressly with world-wide domination in mind.

"None of us were intimidated by the idea of success," said vocalist Paul Rodgers. "We had all tasted acclaim before, and were anxious to do so again—within a different context. That's exactly what Bad Company provided to us."

Perhaps the greatest irony involved with the run-away Bad Co. phenomenon—which started virtually from the instant that their debut single, *Can't Get Enough*, hit the airwaves in 1974—was that each of the musicians involved had to ostensibly "dumb down" their approach in order to make their new band work to its maximum advantage. Both Rodgers and drummer Simon Kirke had previously been involved with the critically acclaimed, but often overlooked blues/rock unit Free, a band that effectively created the musical blueprint that Bad Company was to follow. Guitarist Mick Ralphs had experienced Bright Lights, Big City during his stint in Mott the Hoople, one of the most "hip" bands of the early

'70s art/rock scene. And bassist Boz Burrell had cut his teeth in the multi-faceted progressive-rock unit King Crimson, which stood among the most critically lauded bands of their time. But it wasn't until these four proven rock and roll forces decided to merge their fortunes together that the magic that was Bad Company sprung to life.

"Bad Company came along at just the right time for Paul and I," Kirke said. "Free had completed what had become a rather difficult run, and we weren't sure what to do next. Once we hooked up with Mick, it all seemed to fall together. He had some songs that were basically ready to go... including *Can't Get Enough*, and we were all anxious for a fresh start."

With an intimidating manager (Led Zeppelin's Peter Grant) behind them, and an equally powerful record label (Zeppelin's own Swan Song) at their disposal, it was apparent right from the get-go that there would be no stopping Bad Company from attaining all of their lofty goals. While some critics initially railed about the streamlined, somewhat sanitized blues/rock style that served as this unit's musical foundation, fans immediately rallied to the strident

chords and emotive vocals that filled each and every Bad Company song. Hit followed hit, with the likes of *Good Lovin' Gone Bad*, *Feel Like Makin' Love* and *Movin' On* perpetually keeping this British unit at the top of the charts on both sides of the Atlantic.

"At first we had no idea how big things would become," Kirke said. "Even with *Can't Get Enough* jumping out of the box so well, we were still prepared to undertake things the slow way—opening tours for others until we developed our own following. But within a matter of months we were moving from the 'special guest' slot on tours to the headlining position. It was a wonderful time."

At heart, it was easy to understand Bad Company's appeal. In Rodgers they possessed perhaps the most singularly distinctive voice of his—or any other—rock generation. His throaty, raspy growl could roar like a lion or purr like a kitten as each song dictated, filling even the most mundane band ditty with a soul-wrenching power that drew in the listener like the proverbial moth to flame. In Ralphs they featured a somewhat pedestrian guitarist, but one who seemed to have an unerring knack for song craftsmanship and on-stage showmanship.

"We had all tasted acclaim before, and were anxious to do so again."



PHOTO: LAURENS VAN HOUTEN / FRANK WHITE PHOTO AGENCY



Bad Company

And in Kirke and Burrell they had an unmatched drum/bass combo, one that never failed to provide just the right rhythmic punch whether on stage or in the studio.

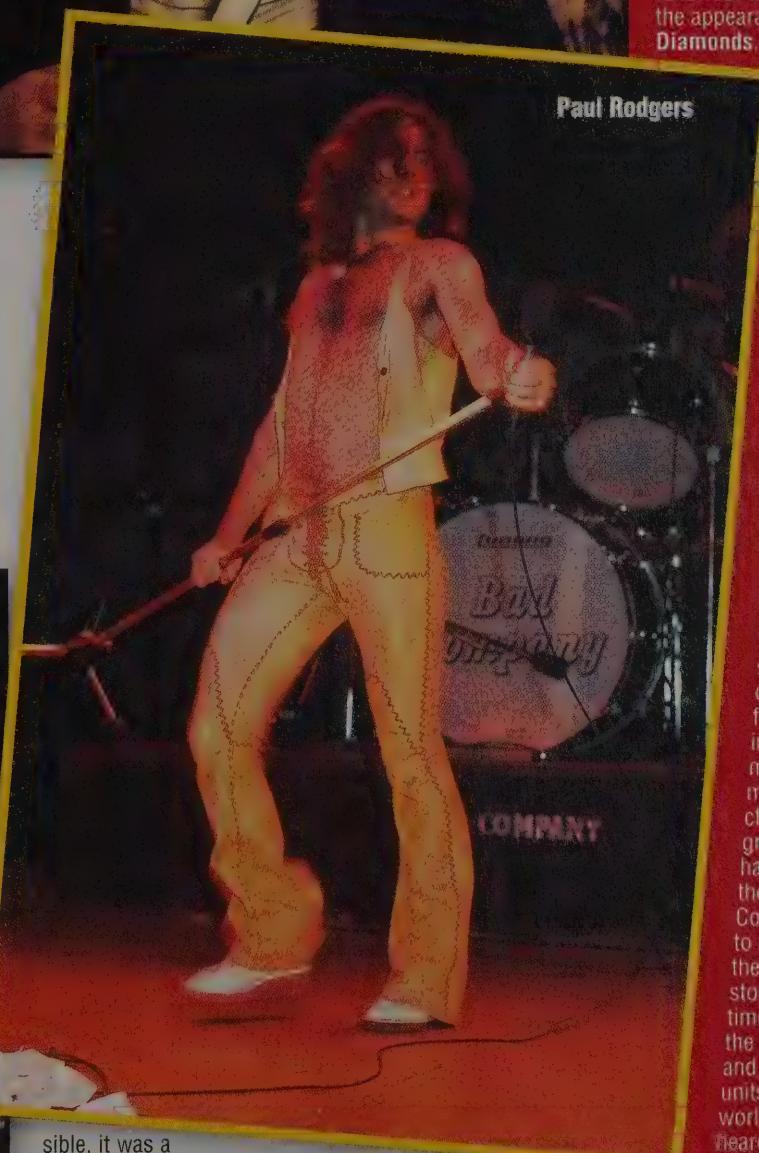
"We had all previously worked within bands where there were problems of one kind or another," Kirke said. "Some of those, as was the case in Free, occurred from the drug use of a member. Others had more to do with personality conflicts. So when we all fell together in a band like Bad Company, where everyone seemed focused only on making the best possible music and making the band as big as pos-

"We had no idea how big things would become."



sible, it was a great relief."

Rather ironically, in light of the "good time" vibe that characterized the band's early days—as well as its member's remembrances—the Golden Age of Bad Company only lasted for four years. While such albums as *Bad Company*, *Straight Shooters* and *Run With the Pack* continually reached the top of the charts, by the time 1977's *Burnin' Sky* emerged, noticeable cracks had begun to appear in the group's previously



Paul Rodgers

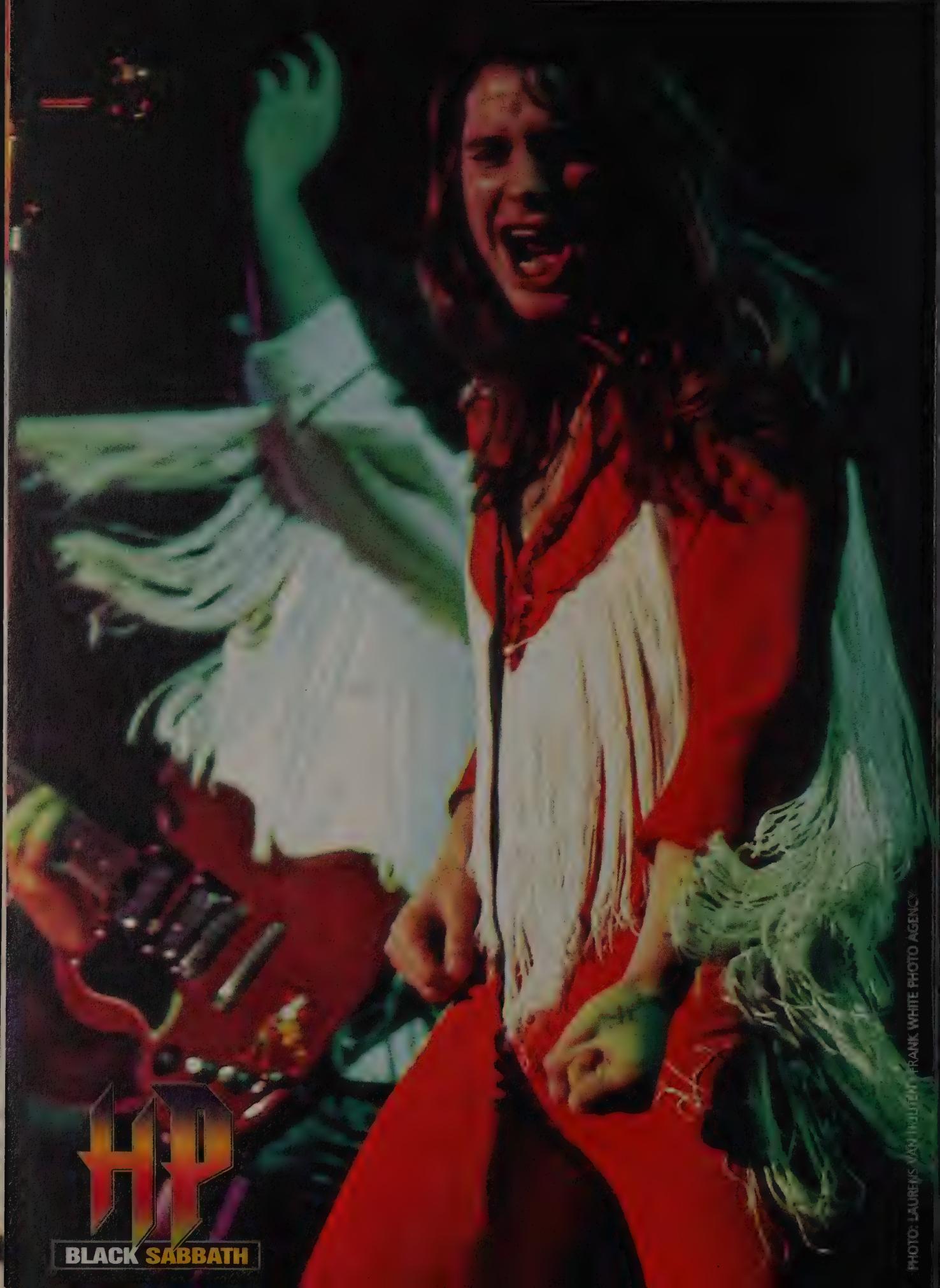
impervious rock veneer. 1979's *Desolation Angels* showcased an expansion of the band's base sound with strings and synthesizers, and despite the hit status of that disc's *Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy*, it was clear that something was wrong within the band's creative core. A three-year hiatus followed, which ended with the appearance of *Rough Diamonds*, a disc that

would represent the last time Rodgers would record with the band until 1998.

Bad Company would rock on throughout the '80s and '90s with a variety of "replacement" vocalists and bassists, but it was never quite the same. Even when the band's original lineup reformed in the late '90s for a series of sold-out tours and a few new recording sessions, most of the magic that had characterized the group's initial era had been lost. But the fact is that **Bad Company** had little to apologize for; the band had withstood the test of time to rank among the most successful, and at times soulful, units the hard rock world had ever heard. And the music they created has

ostensibly served as the soundtrack for a generation. That's certainly not a bad epitaph to have.

"**Bad Company** may be associated with a certain time in rock history, but I think the music was actually timeless," Kirke said. "There was a line in a Free song that went, 'We made a stand that will last forever.' Hopefully that applies to **Bad Company** as well."



HP

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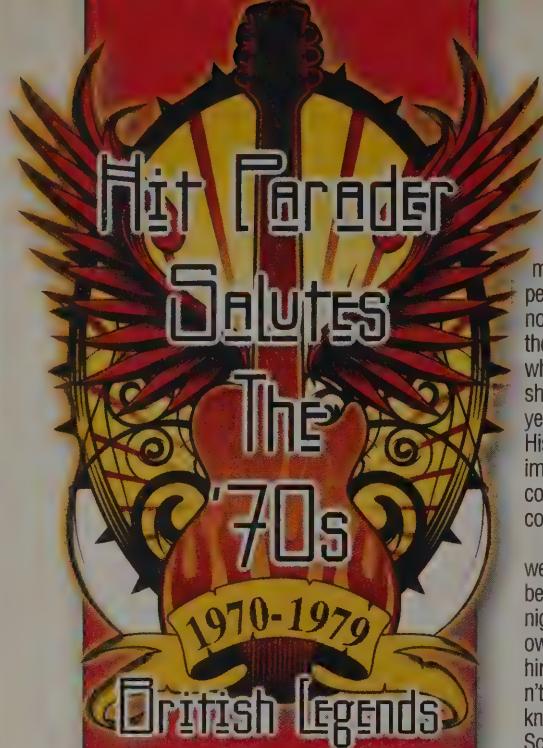
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UFO

MELODIC METAL MASTERS

There was an internal dynamic within UFO during their '70s prime that both powered this multi-national unit to soaring heights... and plummeted them to the depths of internal strife. With a blond German guitarist, Michael Schenker, serving as the centerpiece of this very English melodic metal unit (one featuring the talents of vocalist Phil Mogg, bassist Pete Way, drummer Andy Parker and keyboardist Paul Raymond), there was bound to be conflict. But few could have predicted the mighty reenactments of World War II that served to drive an artistic, personal and cultural stake through the heart of one of the most talented, endearing and yes, enduring bands produced by that era's Euro-rock scene. But just as that inner-band conflict continually threatened to tear UFO asunder, it also served as the foundational motivation for many of the band's groundbreaking hits, songs that in sound, manner and execution still stand among the finest examples of metal craftsmanship ever heard by the ears of mortal man.

"Maybe the most important thing is that UFO has survived in one form or another for more than 30 years," Mogg said. "Sure there were problems at times, those have certainly been well-documented. But the music survives all that and at the same time, makes anything to do with our personalities rather irrelevant."

Perhaps such a brief synopsis of UFO's later turmoil too quickly dismisses one of the great "louds" in rock history. But rather

than dwelling on the often strained relationship that existed between Mogg and Schenker, perhaps we should focus on the beauty of the music they helped create. Before we do, however, perhaps a little historical context is needed. Let's not forget that when UFO first lured Schenker into their band (he was then fronting the Scorpions, who, as we all know, went on to enjoy their own share of fame and fortune), he was a mere 18 years old... and couldn't speak a word of English. His age (which often led to him acting in a rather immature fashion) and his inability to properly communicate led to instant problems. But, oh, could that dude play guitar!

"We were on tour in Europe, and the Scorpions were our opening act," Mogg recalled. "We had been highly impressed by Michael's playing every night—which in retrospect, may have ignited our own guitarist's decision to split in mid-tour. We hired Michael away from the Scorpions, which didn't please his brother Rudolf very much. It's nice to know that things worked out well for everyone." Schenker's addition to the UFO lineup instantly seemed to transform them into one of the most musically diverse and artistically satisfying bands around. Able to play haunting ballads and convincing wall-shakers with equal aplomb, in many ways UFO were a decade before their time, exploring the kind of pop/metal mastery (as well as the shaky guitarist/vocalist relationship) that powered bands like Van Halen and Dokken in the '80s. On such songs as *Rock Bottom*, *Cherry*, *Out in The Street* and *Doctor Doctor*, the band's unique dynamic—and willingness to let Schenker's virtually untapped brilliance light their musical sojourn—made them one of the most successful bands of their era. And at a time when even the likes of the Mighty Zeppelin often felt the sting of criticism for their self-indulgent musical musings, UFO managed to garner near-unanimous press kudos on both sides of the Atlantic.

"Obviously, we were more popular in Europe than in America," Mogg said. "But the media was very kind to us... at least most of the time. They seemed to understand what we were doing, and they were quite supportive of it. It's strange that certain places in America—particularly Chicago—seemed to embrace us, while other places remained quite difficult for us to master. I believe to a great extent the media support—or lack of it—in those places dictated that kind of reaction."

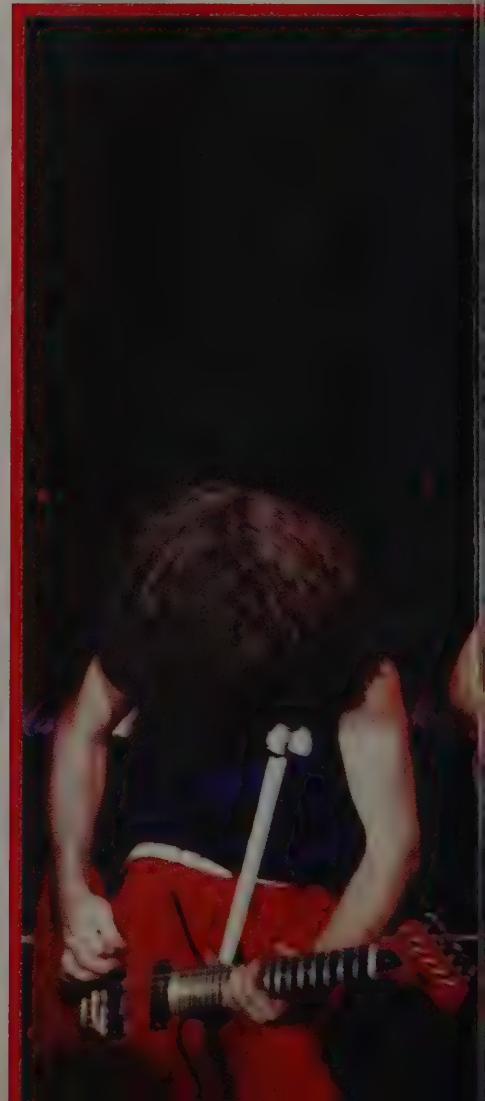
While they may have continually struggled for State-side recognition, and the unpredictable nature of Schenker's personality continued to torture the group's internal chemistry (in 1979 he inexplicably split from the band only days before their biggest American tour was about to begin, only to resurface a month later, acting as if nothing had happened), nothing could seemingly stop UFO from doing what they did best. Even after Schenker finally moved on to start his own band—though he was to return to the UFO fold over the next two decades whenever the mood struck him—UFO continued to rock on, though with both diminishing artistic elan and dropping commercial impact.

"I have been fond of every version of this band," Mogg said. "But I'd be foolish not to admit that to many of our fans the lineup with Michael is our 'classic' lineup. Those songs, that sound, are as much a part of me as my hands or feet. I

think we have created a legacy that we can all be justifiably proud of."

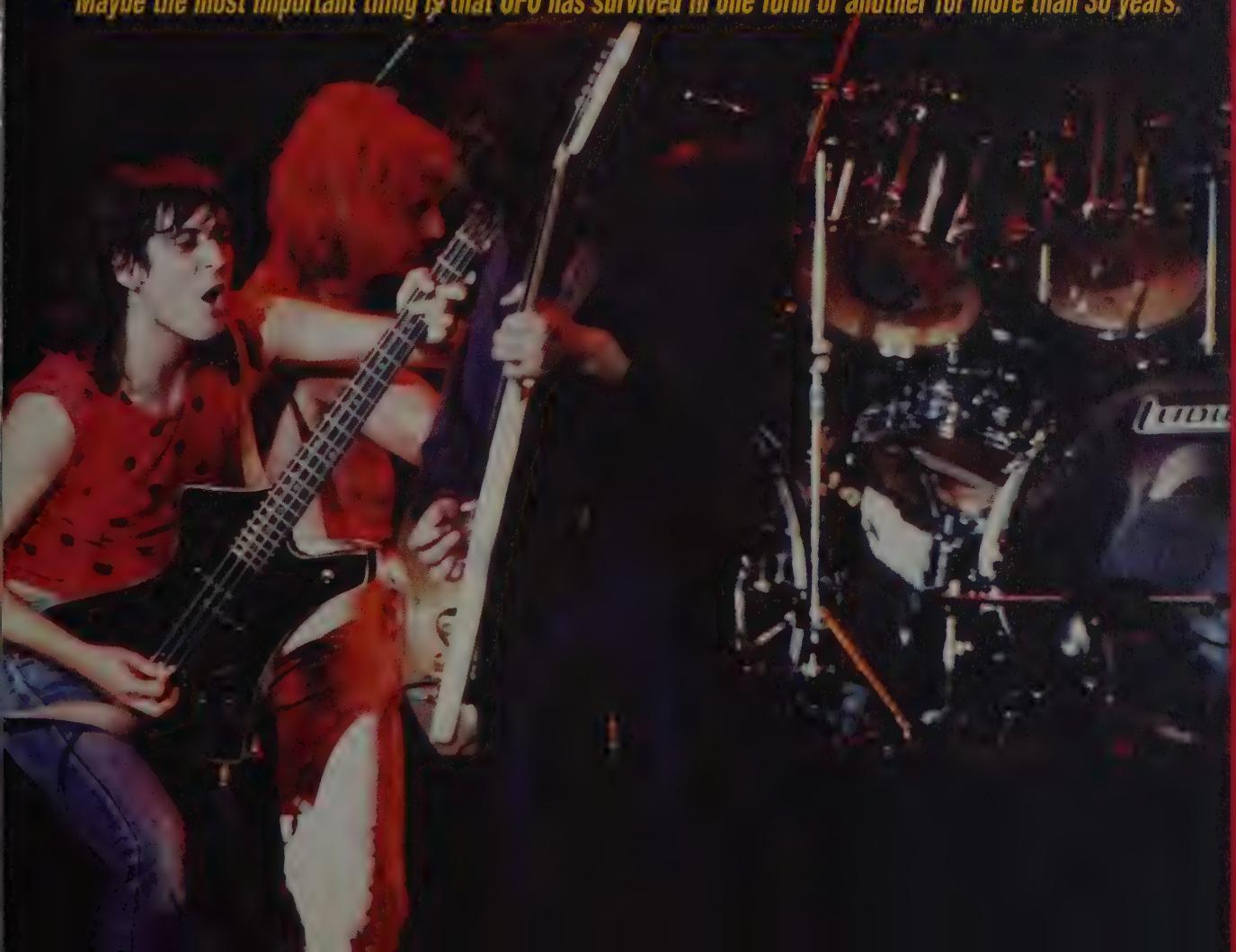
It is perhaps an unfortunate commentary on UFO's lasting impact on the State-side hard rock scene to note that to many reading this, the band's name and music means very little. Their best work has been usurped over the years by bands that followed in their wake—many of whom conveniently "borrowed" the formula of featuring a flashy lead guitarist and a highly accessible hard rock writing style. But, let it be said here and now that at their creative peak, UFO may well have been the best late-'70s metal band in the entire world! Such chart-topping band efforts as 1978's *Lights Out* and 1979's *Strangers In The Night* set the standards against which all hard rock groups of that era were measured—as well as laying the groundwork for the seminal metal movement that would soon transpire in the '80s.

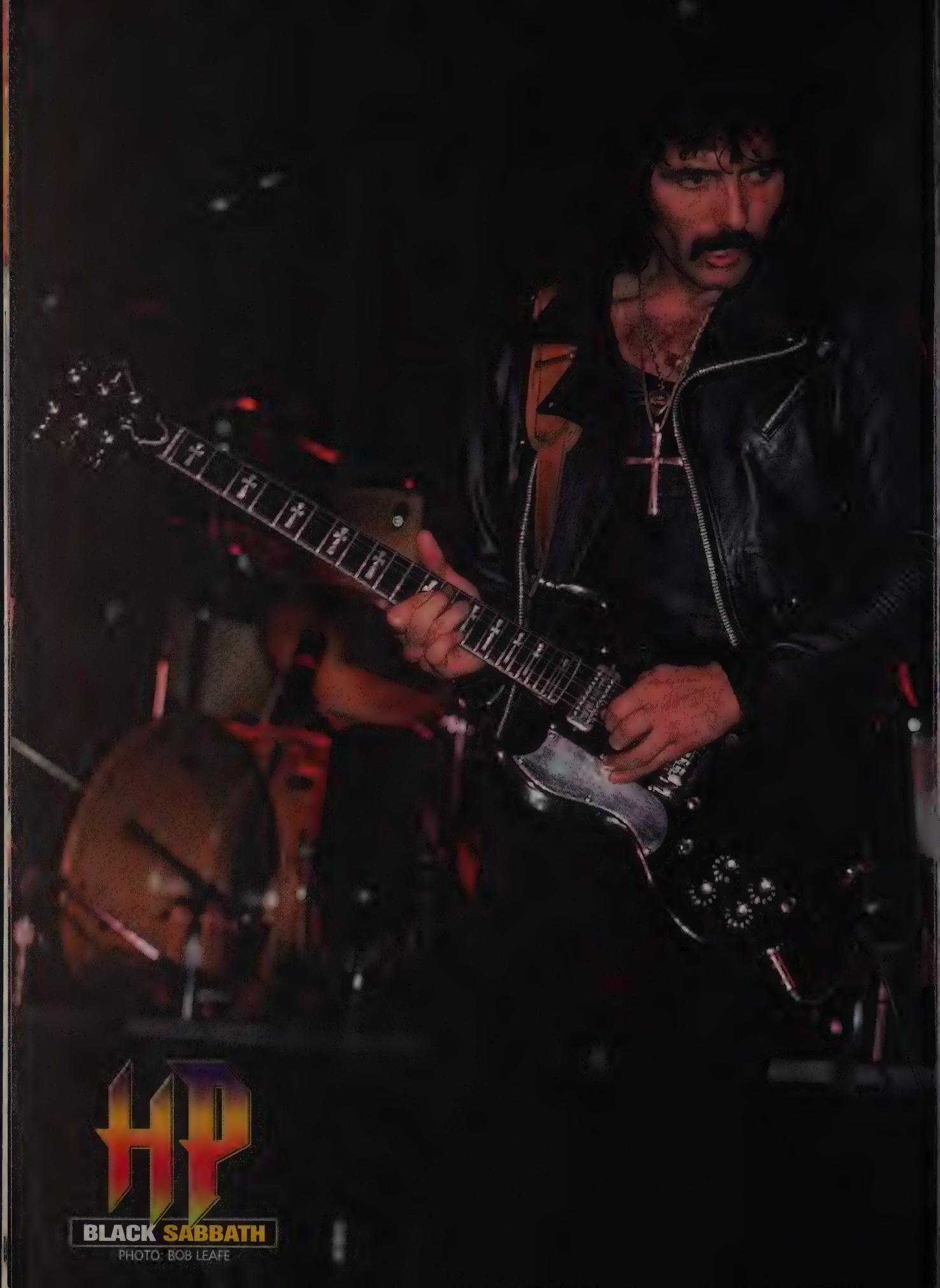
"It was very interesting to see and hear so many bands emerge in the '80s who had obviously taken some of our musical approach to heart," Mogg said. "I don't know if we ever received as much credit as we expected for being at the beginning of all that. But we didn't necessarily want that kind of praise. We always knew what we had accomplished... and so did our fans."





"Maybe the most important thing is that UFO has survived in one form or another for more than 30 years."



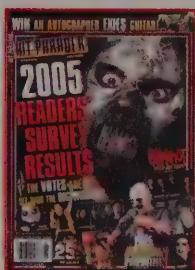
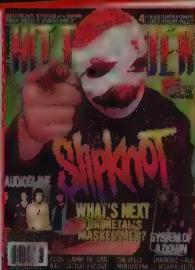


BLACK SABBATH

PHOTO: BOB LEAF

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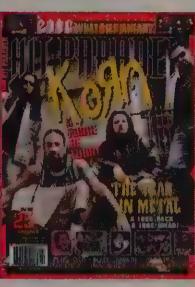
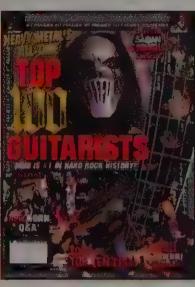
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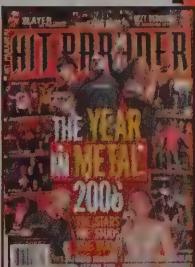
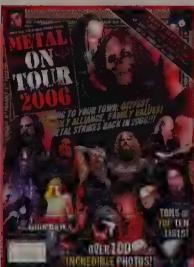
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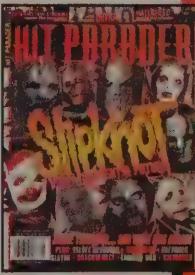
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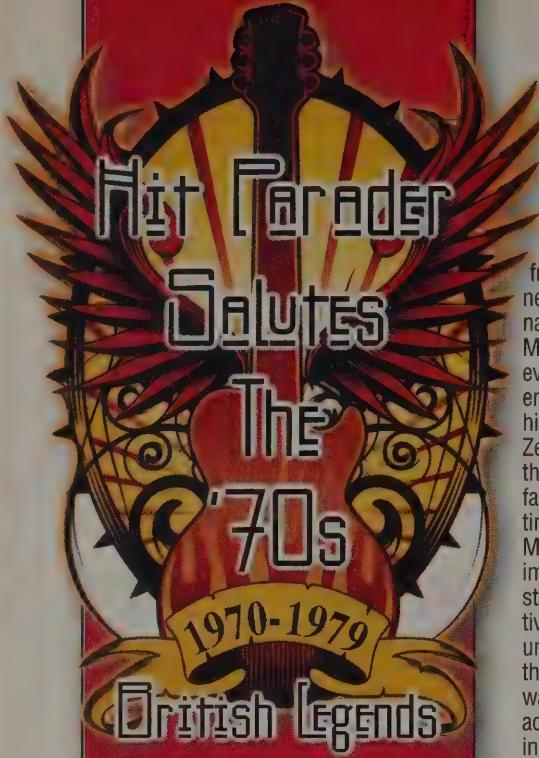
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QUEEN POMP & CIRCUMSTANCE

When Queen first hit the rock scene with their self-titled debut disc in 1974, nobody knew quite what to make of them. On one, it was almost instantly apparent that housed within this band's strident yet soaring sound was something new and different—but exactly how new and different was then still incalculable.

Indeed, there were few available points of reference for the kind of pomp and circumstance that vocalist Freddie Mercury, guitarist Brian May, drummer Roger Taylor and bassist John Deacon brought forth. At least when the likes of Zeppelin first rode over the rock horizon, critics could immediately cajole or crucify them for their bastardized attempts to over-amplify time-tested American blues riffs. But with Queen it was different. Yes, there were some superficial similarities to Zeppelin, where the more bombastic elements of that group's sound provided a foundational element for the Queen attack. But housed within this regal band's style were also strains of classical music, touches of jazz and snatches of tin-pan-alley pop that immediately served to separate them from anyone else on the contemporary music front. It was a heady, heavy mix one that set the entire rock world on its ear... and that was even before they saw the way Queen looked!

And what a shock to the senses that proved to be! With May's dark, curly locks, pirate-style shirts and self-made

guitars he certainly stood out from that era's traditional Guitar Gods. Taylor and Deacon held their own on the fashion front, as well. But they all positively paled next to the satin-suited, bare-chested, finger-nail painted, sartorially splendid vision of Mercury that confronted fans at each and every stop along Queen's seemingly never-ending tour trail. In dramatic contrast to the hippie-cum-minstrel image then presented by Zeppelin's Plant and the fringed leather look that the Who's Daltrey favored at that time,

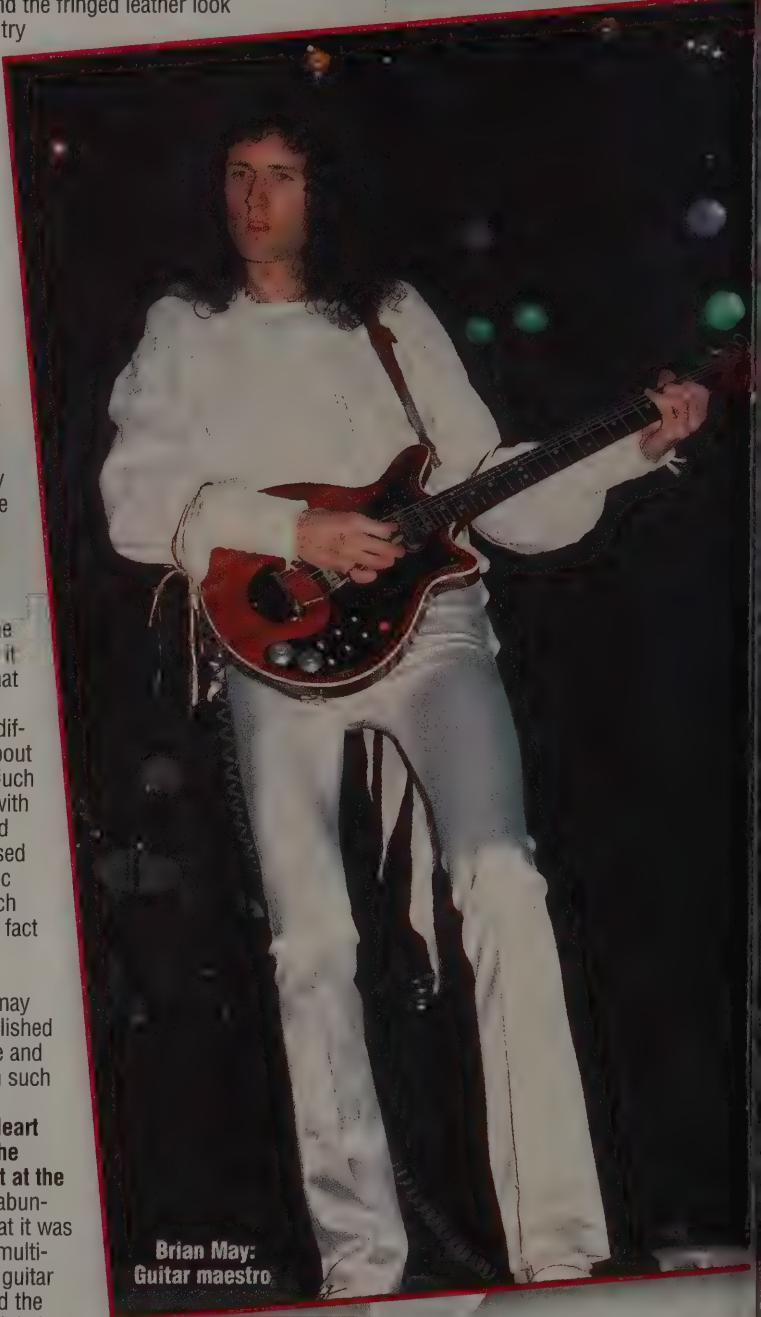
Mercury's image was startling, inventive and slightly unsettling all at the same time. It was, as he later admitted, a look inspired more by Liza Minelli than Mick Jagger. Perhaps the rock world wasn't quite yet ready for such an outlandish dandy... but ready or not, Queen were on their way.

"Freddie was unique from Day One," May said. "From the first time our paths crossed it was easy to see that his influences and inspirations were different from just about everyone else's. Much of that had to do with the fact that he had been born and raised in some very exotic locales—and much had to do with the fact that it was just Freddie."

While Mercury may have quickly established himself as the face and spirit of Queen, on such albums as *Queen*, *Queen II*, *Sheer Heart Attack*, *A Day at the Races* and *A Night at the Opera*, it became abundantly apparent that it was May's distinctive, multi-layered, harmonic guitar tones that provided the band with much of their artistic backbone. Indeed, the Mercury/May team proved to be an ideal tandem, with each simultaneously serving as both inspiration and foil for the other's creative vision. While they often shared the band's songwriting responsibilities, the majority of Queen's best-

known hits, from *Somebody to Love*, *Killer Queen*, *Tie Your Mother Down* and *We Will Rock You* to the immortal *Bohemian Rhapsody* fell primarily under Mercury's creative hand.

"One of the best elements of Queen is that everyone felt free to contribute to the creative process," May said. "But there's no question that Freddie came to the fore when he was writing. The strength of



Brian May:
Guitar maestro

his performances occasionally overshadowed that fact—but not to those who understood this band's inner-workings."

Throughout the '70s Queen's reputation for creating expansive, uniquely expressive prog-rock opuses continued to grow—especially in Europe, where they eventually sold more

"From the first time our paths crossed it was easy to see that Freddie's influences and inspirations were different from just about everyone else."

albums than any group other than the Beatles. America was a little slower to catch on, but once they did, they escalated Queen to the status of arena-packing headliners from coast to coast. While State-side critics occasionally found Mercury's campy, overtly theatrical style a little hard to swallow, few could find fault with the band's pioneering studio work or spirited stage presentations.

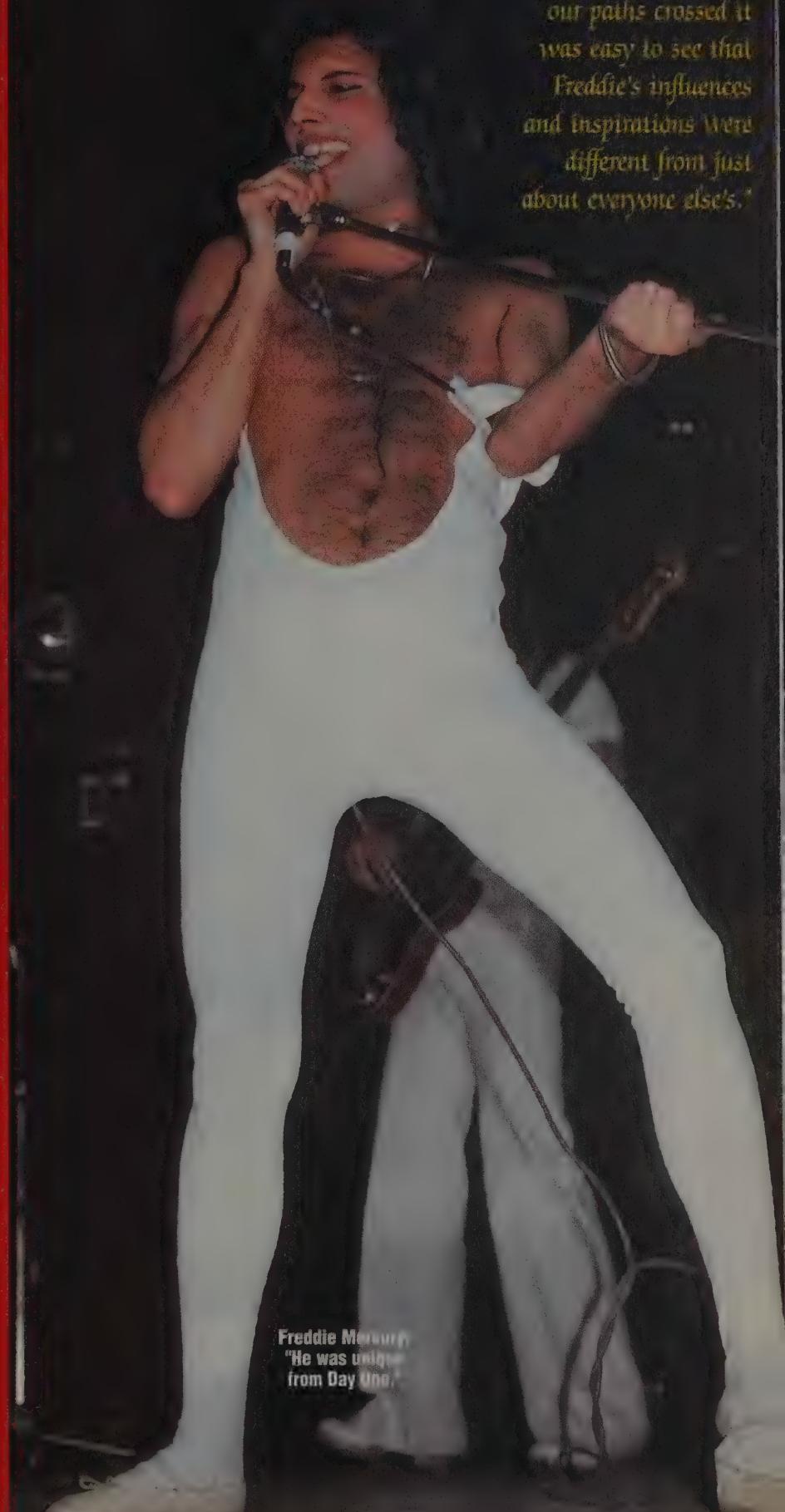
The Queen juggernaut continued to roar throughout the '80s and well into the '90s with such discs as **Hot Space**, **The Works** and **Innuendo** presenting a more sedate but still occasionally challenging band. Yet it slowly became clear to the band's followers that the unit's most distinctive and influential work revolved around their landmark '70s efforts. And as Mercury's health began to fail (he was to succumb to an AIDS-related illness in 1993), Queen's role as hard rock innovators began to diminish... though their influence on a younger generation of bands never did.

"It's so rewarding to have so many of today's bands cite our work as an inspiration," May said. "That's really all any group can ask."

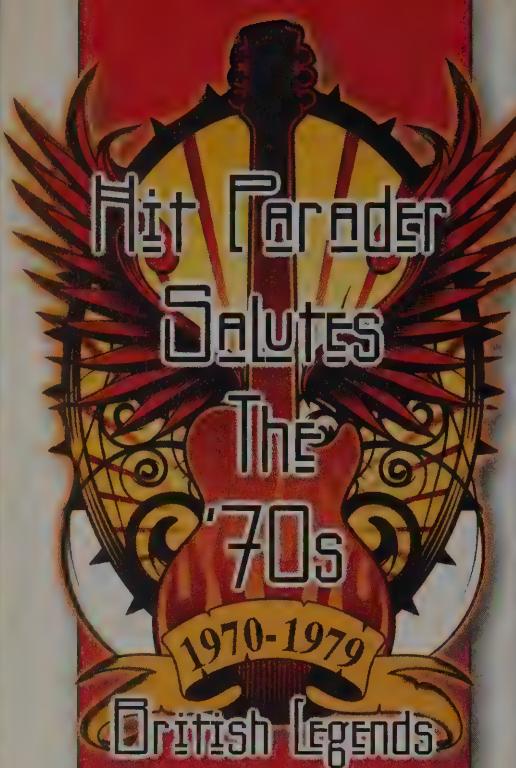
Considering how closely their look, sound and image was associated with Mercury, it was nothing short of shocking when in 2005 Queen announced that they'd again hit the tour trail... this time with former Free/Bad Company frontman Paul Rodgers as vocalist. The mere notion of Rodgers joining forces with Queen was enough to enrage just as many rock and roll "purists" as it has pleased. On one side, you had long-time Queen fans, many of whom were aghast at the thought of anyone, anywhere, anyhow attempting to step into the sainted shoes of the late, great Mercury. On the other, you had the die-hard fans of Rodgers, most of whom turned up their noses at the image of the "macho" vocalist attempting to sing some of Queen's positively prissy pop/metal anthems. Of course, in the middle of all this commotion were millions of rock fans around the world who were thrilled to once again have May and Taylor working under the legendary Queen banner.

"Queen has always been so near and dear to my heart," May said. "But the concept of doing these songs as Queen without Freddie just didn't seem right for a very long time. We considered a variety of options over the years, but none of them sat properly with us. But once we met Paul—someone whom I've obviously admired for a very long time—things just seemed to click. He's about as different from Freddie as you can get in his stage and singing style. But he brings something to the music that is magical. The songs take on an entirely different feel, and that's what we wanted. We weren't looking for someone to mimic Freddie."

PHOTO: FRANK WHITE



Freddie Mercury
"He was unique from Day One."



Rainbow A Tempestuous Force

Despite whatever hard rocking heights it may have reached, in the eyes of many—including its key members—Rainbow was always considered the “other” band. It held that distinction for founder/guitarist Ritchie Blackmore, who used Rainbow’s expansive hard rock format as an occasional escape from his far-more-famous musical home within Deep Purple. And it was also the “other” band for the group’s original vocalist Ronnie James Dio, who despite the wide-spread notoriety his work with Rainbow would generate during that band’s mid-70s heyday, would go on to bigger, though not necessarily better things with both Black Sabbath and Dio.

But despite its status as a less-than-headline attraction, Rainbow (named, according to legend, after the famed Sunset Strip rock club) certainly held a special appeal within the hearts and minds of its legion of loyal followers. After all, here was a group of ever-changing (except, of course, for the Man In Black himself), top-flight musicians, all determined to mine commercial gold without sacrificing one iota their artistic integrity. It was a delicate, and at times cumbersome, balancing act. But when it worked—which was often—it produced some of the most stirring, guitar-driven rock to be experienced in an era when the likes of Zeppelin, Sabbath and Priest still roamed free.

“I always found Rainbow to be a very satisfying outlet for my music,” Blackmore stated a few years ago.

“Perhaps what I liked best is that while I always valued everyone’s opinion, it wasn’t a true democracy. I had control of the final decisions, which I must admit I liked quite a bit.”

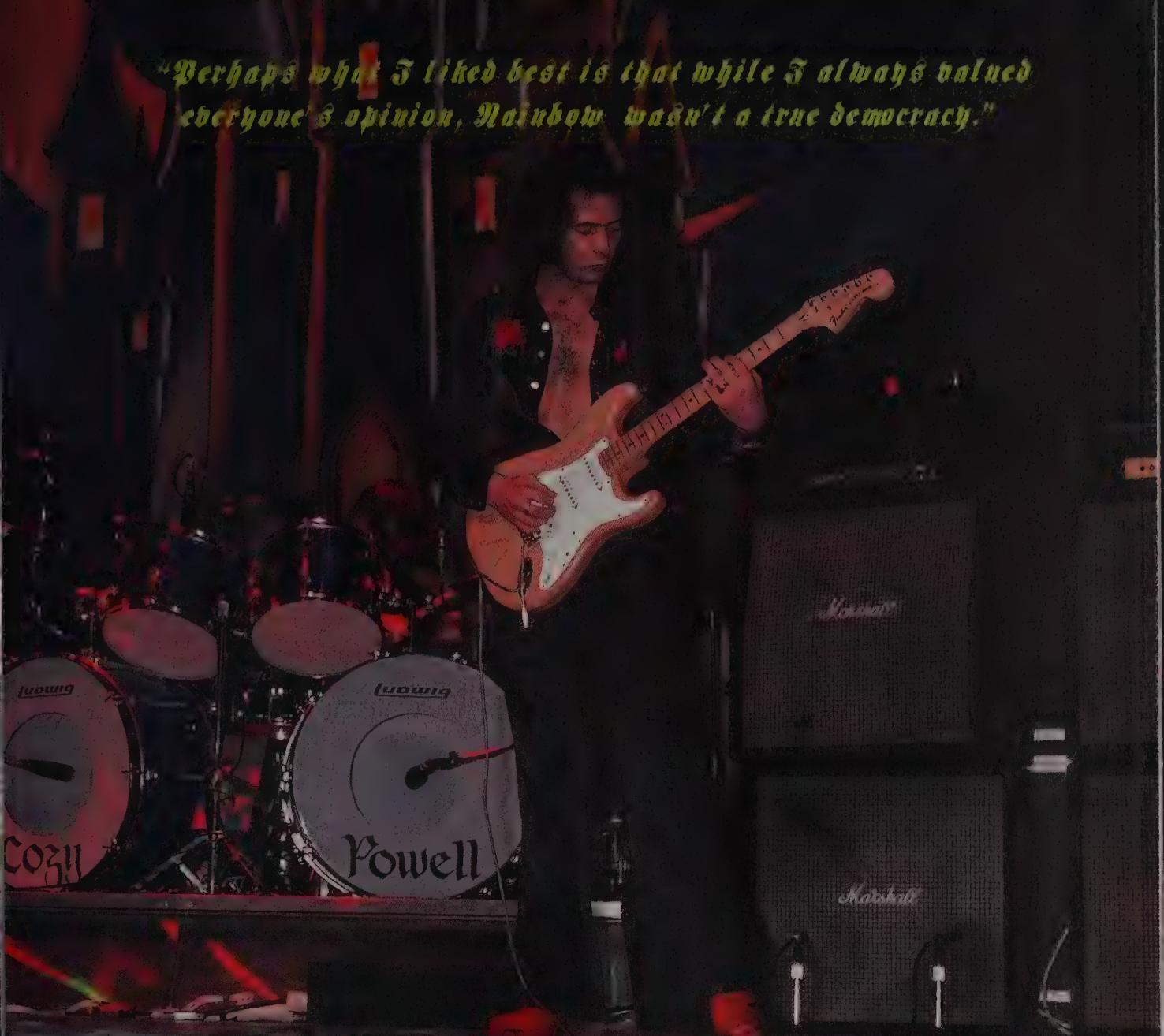
In sharp contrast to his often tumultuous relationships within Deep Purple (to whom he would return in 1984, before leaving again in 1993 to temporarily re-ignite Rainbow’s musical flame) whatever Blackmore said was instant “law” in the land of Rainbow. There was no Jon Lord or Roger Glover to reign him in, nor an Ian Gillan to enrage him. And while he grew to respect and admire Dio’s sharp mind and powerful voice, on such albums as **Rainbow Rising** and **Long Live Rock & Roll**, it was clear to the variety of musicians who would eventually pass through the Rainbow fold (eventually including, somewhat ironically, the likes of Lord and Glover—both then on “hiatus” from the Purple People) there were only two ways to operate within the bounds of Rainbow—Blackmore’s way... or the highway.

“Working with Ritchie was always something of a challenge,” Glover stated. “It was a bit different in Rainbow than in Purple because both Jon and I knew what we were stepping into there... which was fine with us. I was able to produce the band, which was very interesting. And the music was always first-rate.”

With his penchant for blending minstrel-inspired melodies with snippets of classical music and full-throttle metal riffs, Blackmore’s aspirations for Rainbow continually made them stand out from the hard rock crowd. The band may have lacked a degree of the *Larger Than Life* panache that helped continually propel Purple to the top of the charts, but whether it was on such rough-‘n-ready riff rockers as *Man On A Silver Mountain* and *Starstruck* or more plaintive fare such as the band’s inventive take on the Yardbirds’ *Still I’m Sad*, they played hard rock with a degree of style, substance and intelligence too rarely heard... either before or since.



"Perhaps what I liked best is that while I always valued everyone's opinion, Rainbow wasn't a true democracy."



Ronnie James Dio (left) and Ritchie Blackmore

When I play something, I want it to present some degree of challenge both to the musicians involved and the audience that's listening," Blackmore said. "That's why I found it difficult to play some of our bigger hits like *Since You've Been Gone*, on stage. I know some fans wanted to hear them, but they were rather boring to play."

Of course, dealing with the mercurial Blackmore—and his ever-unpredictable nature—was a full day's work for any and all involved. Unquestionably, his demanding behavior was the key reason that nearly two dozen different musicians (including four vocalists, Dio, Graham Bonnet, Joe Lynn Turner and Doogie White) passed through the band's door one time or another during Rainbow's two separate incarnations. But no one who ever stepped through the group's portal ever expected the work to be easy or undemanding on either their talent or their soul. And Blackmore seemed to derive particular pleasure from push-

ing his troops to the edge, time after time.

"Ritchie has a very strange sense of humor at times," Glover said. "He will challenge those around him until they challenge him back. It's almost a test of wills. Those that pass that test continue on, while those that don't tend to fall by the way-side rather quickly."

By now it's quite obvious that despite the stellar cast of musicians that often surrounded him (including at different times, the likes of drummer Cozy Powell, bassist Bob Daisley and keyboardist Don Airey) the core of Rainbow was, is and will always be the inimitable Blackmore. His moody guitar stylings and blues-laced lead runs filled every song in the band's catalog with a "must-listen" sense of purpose that often belied their somewhat mundane lyrical attitude. Throughout his stint with Rainbow, he added to the legacy he had already begun to build with Deep Purple—that of a true six-string maestro. Indeed, Blackmore always stood head-and-shoulders above the vast

majority of his guitar-playing brethren... and stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the most star-studded instrumentalists of that rock era.

Lombardo may have been heavier, Hendrix may have been wilder, Clapton may have been cool, and Page may have been more clever. But there was just always something about Blackmore's playing that made him special—a perpetually on-the-cutting-edge style, a schizophrenic frailty to his sound, that always kept the listener wondering where he was going to go next. Was he going to soar to stratospheric heights upon the concert stage, or throw one of his renowned hissy-fits and storm off after only a song or two? That, in a nut-shell, may have been the gist of Rainbow's appeal.

"I don't try to analyze my playing," Blackmore said. "To me, it's just rock and roll. There are certainly blues elements in there, but when you start dissecting what you're doing you run the risk of losing what makes it special."

Hit Parader Salutes The '70s 1970-1979 British Legends

JUDAS PRIEST THE METAL GODS

It's a widely-held belief that Judas Priest have rarely received their due credit as heavy metal pioneers and innovators. Hailing from the same home town as Black Sabbath (Birmingham, England), but arriving on the rock scene in 1975, some half-a-decade behind their metallic forebears, always cast them in the light of striving younger brothers to many followers of metal machinations. In addition, their dependency on outlandish stage props—including 30 foot-high walls of amplifiers—always provided them with a certain Spinal Tapish "feel"... one further amplified by their affinity for wearing black leather stage outfits and riding customized Harley motorcycles. But, the fact is that such happenstances should really have little relevancy on dictating the true impact that the Priest Beast has had on establishing the musical and cultural parameters of this thing called heavy metal.

In fact, in any number of ways, Judas Priest has epitomized the metal form as no band has done before—and as no band has done since. With their penchant for creating wall-shaking album showcases in addition to their unmatched theatrical stage flair, from their inception in the mid-'70s, these British Bashers have proudly stood their ground as the ultimate metal machine. Unlike their rock predecessors, they were a "pure" metal band, uninterested

in the occasional foray into acoustic tenderness or hippie-styled ideals. They never answered to such titles as "hard rock" or "psychedelic." To gain Priest's undivided attention, you needed to feed at the same metallic trough that they called home.

"Before Priest there were certainly metal bands, but I think we took the purity of metal ideals to the next level," said vocalist Rob Halford. "We didn't have expansive artistic aspirations... we just wanted to be the best metal band on earth."

Quite simply, from the very beginning, Priest lived, ate and drank the metal lifestyle, and exuded that metallic credo back to their millions of headbanging fans around the globe. In Halford, these megawatt masters possessed a flamboyant singer with a four octave range who showed no fear of using his explosive voice to shatter ear drums and artistic principles with equal aplomb. In guitarists K.K. Downing and Glenn Tipton, Priest unleashed a double lead guitar attack the likes of which the rock world had never before experienced. Exchanging fleet-fingered riffs as well as the center stage spotlight,

the paired axe aces provided the band's sound with a structural foundation and musical flair that served to provide Priest with their quintessential metallic element.

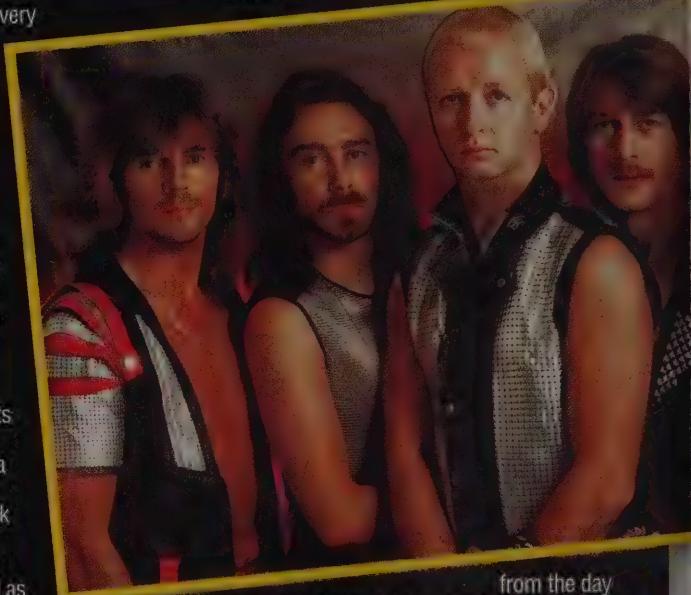
"Today it may be hard to believe that when Glenn and I started playing dual lead guitars it was rather revolutionary," Downing said. "No one else was doing that at that time."

When Judas Priest hit the top of the charts in the early '80s, with the release of their first platinum album, *Screaming For Vengeance*, it represented the culmination of a long, uphill battle for recognition and credibility. Prior to their break-through success, Priest had represented almost a caricature of all that had proceeded them. Lacking the multi-faceted skills of Led Zeppelin, the quasi-Satanic overtones of Black Sabbath or the improvisational flair of Deep Purple, Priest was a no-holds-barred rock juggernaut—a band that knew only two speeds, loud and fast or louder and faster. There was little subtlety to offset the group's heavy-handed approach, and while the band's imaginative song structures would venture into previously uncharted metal terrain over the ensuing years, at heart Priest always remained true to the basic metal elements—hammering guitars, screamed vocals and a live-for-today lyrical attitude.

"Judas Priest's goal was always to deliver a special style of heavy metal music," Tipton said. "But the trick was to deliver it with a style that was totally our own. From the moment we came out in the late '70s, people were trying to

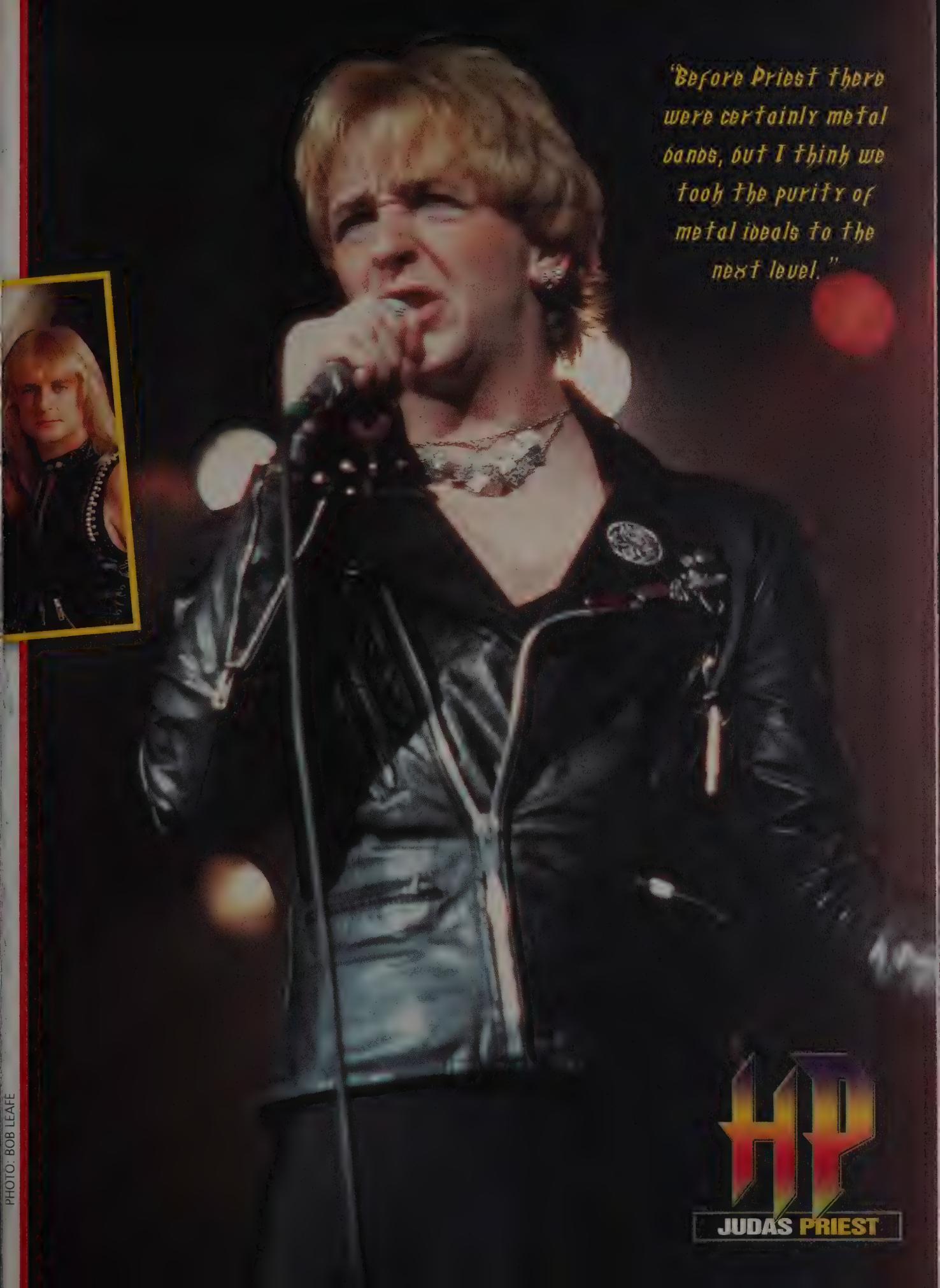
compare us to Zeppelin, Sabbath or whoever else happened to be around at the moment. There may have been elements of what those other bands did that had influenced us—Sabbath, after all, had come from our home town—but we never tried to be like them. Our goal was to create the purest form of metal music, and I believe we definitely succeeded."

While they were never critical favorites, with many media scribes falsely believing Priest to be little more than a mindless riff factory, almost



from the day their debut disc, *Sad Wings Of Destiny*, was released it was evident that this was one band willing to take as many musical chances as necessary in order to succeed. Mixing almost operatic drama with their traditional guitar overload, on succeeding discs such as *British Steel*, *Defenders Of The Faith* and *Hell Bent For Leather*, Priest set themselves up as the true defenders of the metal faith, one of the few bands willing to state their no-holds-barred allegiance to the metal cause, and one quite capable of backing up that allegiance through the sheer power of their music. At times it even seemed as if they enjoyed scoffing at their detractors. When the leather-clad Halford would burst through the band's exploding wall of amps atop his gleaming Harley it was high camp, high drama and high energy all rolled into one overwhelming rock and roll package. Priest was an all-out assault on the eyes, ears and sensibilities of all who dared attend one of their shows.

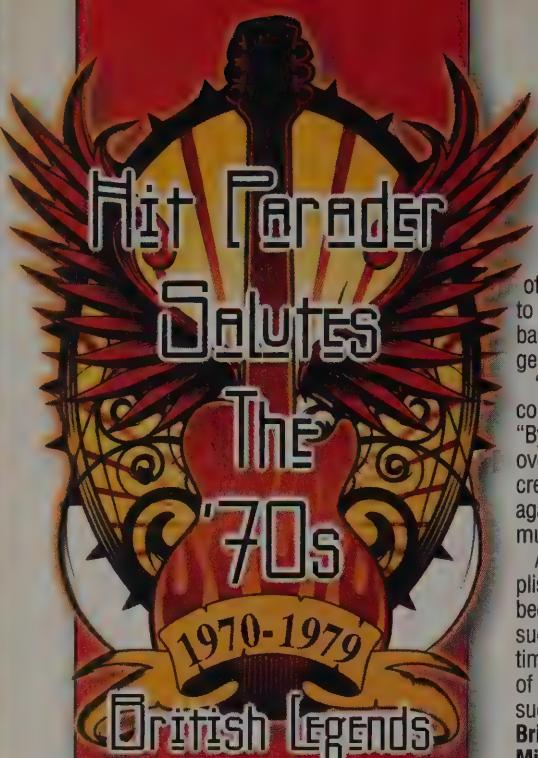
"It was never a question of whether anything was 'too much,'" Downing explained. "It was more of a question of 'could it be done?' We were never concerned about taking a great deal of the money we made and pouring it right back into the band, getting the best and biggest light show we could and making sure that each stage show was a full-scale production that would overwhelm everyone who witnessed it. Coming up with some of those ideas for the stage show almost took as much time as preparing material for a new album."



*'Before Priest there
were certainly metal
bands, but I think we
took the purity of
metal ideals to the
next level.'*

JP

JUDAS PRIEST



ROBIN TROWER SIX-STRING SUPERMAN

I **haven't** had the time to say that the '70s were a fascinating time in rock history. Indeed, that decade may well represent the single greatest flowering of creative musical genius the world has ever known. With the initial wave of post-hippie rock receding squarely in the rearview mirror, and before the predictability of "corporate rock" began to rob the medium of its inherent vitality, there was a brief shining period when the rock form grew at an almost exponential rate. Blues roots were transformed into solid riffs... pop ditties were molded into rock operas... structural guitar-bass-drum elements were "frankenstitched" into progressive-rock masterworks. It was a heady time for all involved.

Some of the fast-evolving process could be directly attributed to the mental and moral attitudes of the time—a period when free speech, free sex and free thinking seemed to be at the apex of their cultural appeal. Some of the musical growth reflected a need for a mind-bending alternative to the Vietnam-derived political hostilities that seemed on the verge of tearing apart democracy at its very core. And some of it was directly inspired by a generation of rockers who finally felt able to fully express their creativity through the music they played. Robin Trower was a product of this

amazing era—a musician who seemed to innately understand this new-found artistic and cultural freedom. And this lanky, long-haired Englishman possessed just the kind of musical imagination and instrumental elan to turn the hopes, fears and dreams of his fan base into one of the signature sounds of his generation.

"I always believed that music needed to come from the heart and soul," Trower said. "By the time I began my solo career, threads of overt attempts at commercialism were already creeping into rock and roll. I tried to rebel against that in some ways... while still making music that a large audience could enjoy."

Apparently Trower succeeded on accomplishing a number of his artistic ambitions, because he soon emerged as one of the most successful and respected musicians of his time. Drawing heavily on the still-vibrant aura of Jimi Hendrix, on a series of mid-'70s discs such as *Twice Removed From Yesterday*, *Bridge of Sighs*, *For Earth Below* and *Long Misty Days*, Trower was able to bridge the gap between prog-rock and hard rock with a sound that was simultaneously sinuous, ethereal and ambient. At the same time, while he seemed to be content with exploring the musical stratosphere with his mind-expanding guitar excursions, he managed to keep one foot firmly planted in the blues, a fact evidenced by his guitar textures, and the vocal approach used by original band frontman James Dewar. It was a formula that worked beautifully, producing a string of gold and platinum selling albums that kept him busy on the road for months at a time.

"I was fortunate that when our first album came out in 1974, it just seemed to strike the right nerve with a number of people. It was very rewarding for me to present something that I believed in so strongly, and have a wide audience accept it and rally behind it."

Prior to branching off on his own in 1973, Trower had cut his primary rock and roll teeth in the late '60s and early '70s with the influential English progressive-rock band Procul Harum. But as many fans reading this may recall, that was a band often dominated more by moody keyboard passages (think *Whiter Shade of Pale*) than by guitar-driven power. So it wasn't until this Essex-born Stratocaster master stepped forward and launched a solo career that his true instrumental dexterity began to emerge in all its six-string glory. While constant comparisons to Hendrix began to quickly weigh heavily on his creative soul, the fact was that Trower seemed to draw inspiration from the fallen guitar master rather than merely "channeling" elements of his style.

"At that time, if you played a Stratocaster, the comparisons were rather inevitable," Trower said. "It was something that at first pleased me, then became something I more-or-less tolerated. Hendrix was an influence on every guitarist of that era, and you needed to draw upon it and absorb it as best you could. I always felt quite confident in my ability to create something totally new and unique."

Due to the "spacey" vibe of his material, and his ability—and willingness—to transform

such song as *100 Rolling Stones*, *My Garden* and *Althea* into extended in-concert "monsters," at the peak of his artistic and commercial powers Trower always had almost as many media detractors as supporters. That ratio only seemed to increase throughout the decade as he moved from show opener to theater headliner to eventual stadium-star attraction. In part, such a mixed response is what compelled him to begin expanding his sound on 1977's *In City Dreams*, a disc that featured notable jazz flavorings and a funkier guitar sound. That pattern of overt experimentation continued on 1978's *Caravan to Midnight*, a disc that in many ways symbolized the end of the first era of his solo career.

"I felt I had proven myself to a great extent by that time," he said. "I didn't want to run the risk of repeating ideas or failing to evolve. I felt it was important to continually test myself and test the music I was making."

More musical eras would follow for Trower—including a pair of early '80s albums with former Cream bassist Jack Bruce, and a series of wide-ranging solo efforts that would carry him through the next 25 years. As recently as 2006 he released a live album, *Living Out*

"By the time I began my solo career, threads of overt commercialism were already creeping into rock and roll."

el Time which chronicled many of his career highlights. But while he may still be an active force on the music scene, there's no question that Trower's *True Moment In The Sun* occurred back in the mid-'70s when his impetuous, string-bending, mind-warping guitar excursions turned on a generation seeking just that kind of musical outlet. For that alone, Robin Trower will forever stand in the pantheon of true hard rock guitar gods.

"Trower's role in shaping the sound and attitude of the '70s is generally overlooked," said a music industry insider. "Maybe it's because of the Hendrix association or the simple fact that a lot of the more 'out there' rock of that era hasn't aged particularly well. He's one of those unique artists whose music just doesn't receive the kind of attention and respect it deserves."



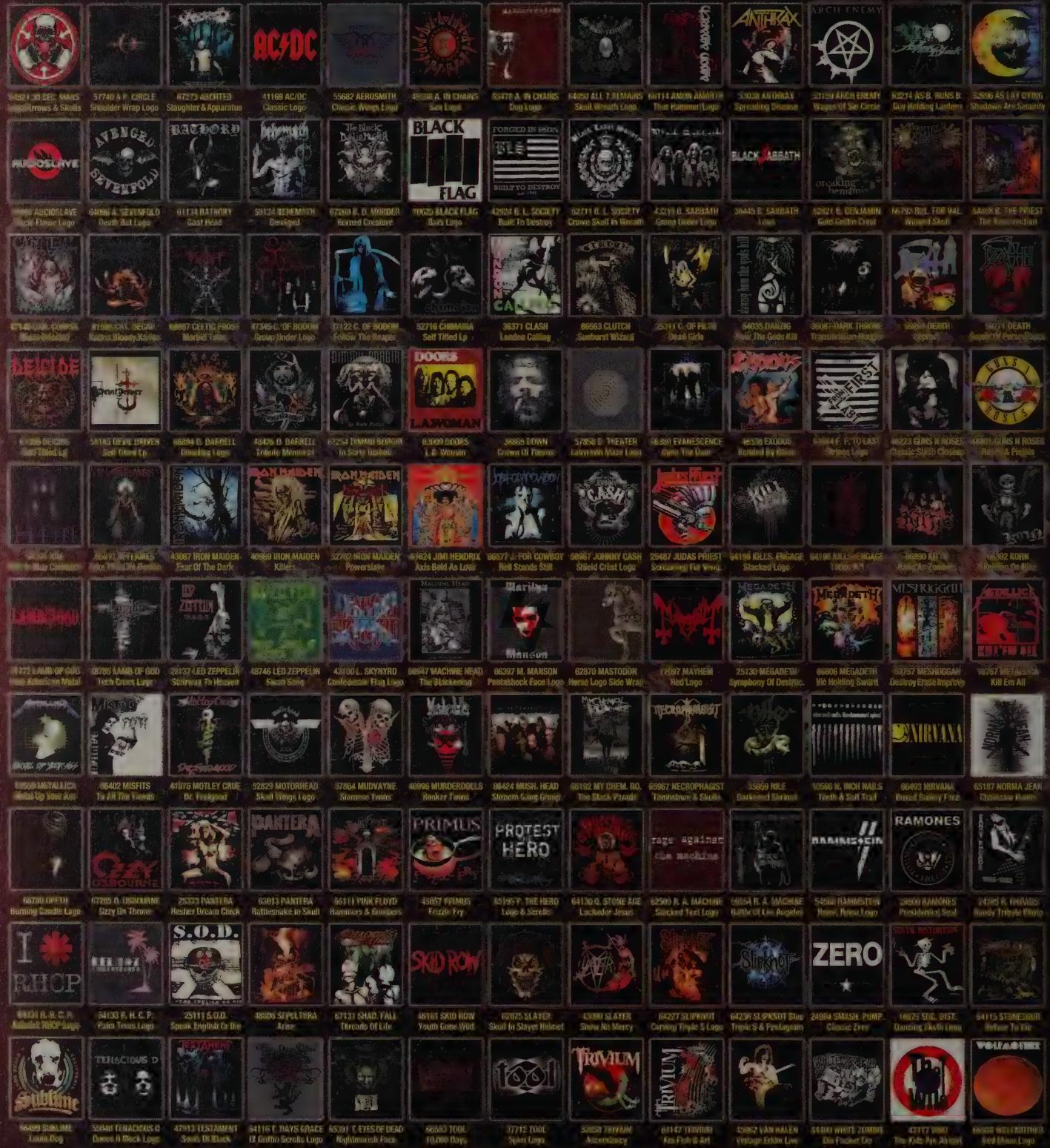
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Hit Parader Salutes The '70s 1970-1979 British Legends

DEEP PURPLE HIGHWAY STARS

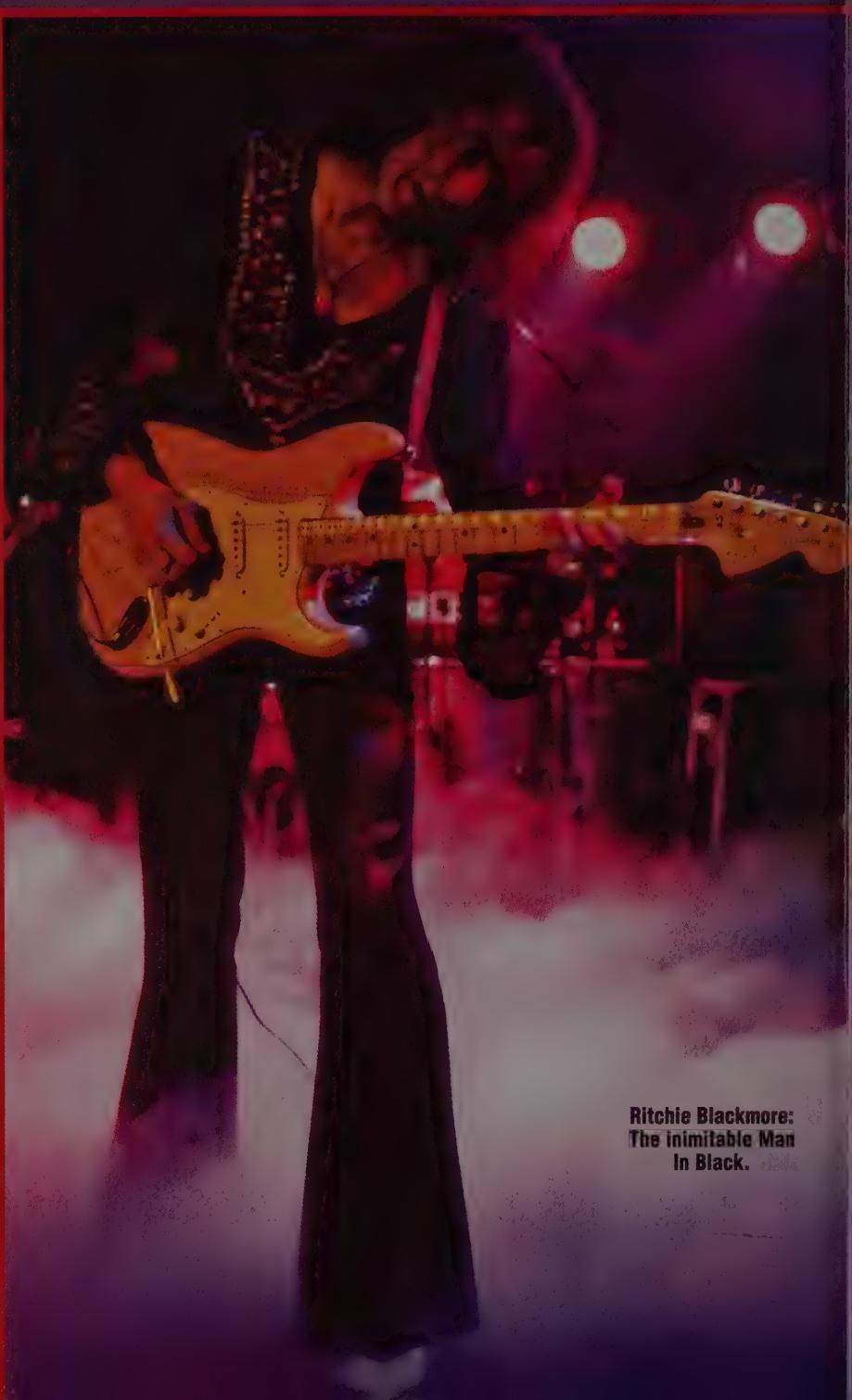
The year was 1974, shortly after their album *Machine Head* had catapulted them to the pinnacle of the hard rock world. Deep Purple was on tour, and the energy and anticipation was palpable for the crowd that had gathered backstage to stand in the presence of these budding Rock Gods.

It was a classic scene. The backstage door was sealed tight. A beefy security guard stood firmly in front of the portal with an intimidating scowl on his face. From the other side of the locked sanctuary sweet guitar sounds were emanating, cutting through the dark arena atmosphere like the proverbial hot knife through butter. "He's in there," a record label executive said in hushed tones of reverence, as if not to disturb the maestro behind the guarded entrance. Just then, as if on cue, a flurry of trademarked notes could be heard—then silence. Minutes passed. The drama built. Finally the door burst open and the thin, black-clad figure of Ritchie Blackmore emerged, his snow-white Stratocaster in hand. He dismissively and unsmilingly passed by the entourage that had gathered near Deep Purple's dressing area and joined his bandmates for a pre-concert meeting in an adjoining room. As Blackmore walked by, all eyes lit up around him. In the music biz, they call it Star Quality. Some guys have it—most don't.

Blackmore has always had it in spades. That's the way it was for Deep Purple throughout most of their historic 40 year career. The band centered around the tempestuous, talented and totally unpredictable whims of the mercurial Mr. Blackmore while his bandmates—most often keyboardist Jon Lord, vocalist Ian Gillan, drummer Ian Paice and bassist Roger Glover—lived life in the shadow of his presence. Even when Blackmore departed the Purple scene—as he did both in the mid-'70s to form Rainbow, and then again in the early-'90s—his influence remained per-

vasive. It's simply impossible to hear any of the band's classic tunes—*Smoke On The Water*, *Space Truckin'*, *My Woman From Tokyo*—without thinking of the Man In Black.

Indeed, for many followers of the hard rock form, the music of Deep Purple has formed a veritable soundtrack for their lives. But to true fans, it is the band's history that is as compelling as this unit's musical production. During their lengthy existence this legendary British band has encountered more ups and downs than a Coney Island roller coaster, yet they've managed to battle back every time to



Ritchie Blackmore:
The inimitable Man
In Black.

David Coverdale: He made a memorable mid-'70s Purple stop before forming Whitesnake.

continually confound those who forecast their demise. Throughout their career, the band has created a series of unforgettable albums, including such '70s staples as *In Rock*, *Made In Japan* and *Fireball*, all of which served to influence succeeding generations of rock acts as few other recordings have done. And whether it's been with Blackmore, or without, Deep Purple has not only survived, they've prospered.

"Our situation with Ritchie has always been an unpredictable one," Glover said. "He is a personality that is quite different, and at times somewhat hard to understand."

Somewhat strangely, despite selling more than 60 million albums world-wide during their historic four-decade run at the top of the rock pile, and despite writing and recording some of the best-known songs in metal history, Deep Purple too often run the risk of being cast aside in favor of more "hallowed" bands. Okay, they may never have possessed the quasi-mystical aura of Zeppelin or the slightly satanic overtones so effectively employed by Sabbath. But what these immensely talented British rockers always had were more smarts, style and sense than just about anyone else around.

Oh sure, they went through more members than any other band you can think of (at best count five vocalists, four guitarists, three bassists, two keyboard players and a partridge in a pear tree), but somehow, whether it was their so-called Mk. I, Mk. II, Mk. III or Mk. IV lineups, they still managed to sell plenty of albums and pack auditoriums around the globe thanks to the inherent charms of their classically-tinged hard rock attack.

"We have had quite a history," Glover said with a smile. "But no matter who has been in the band at any given time—or who hasn't—

"You'd never find Ritchie and Gillan together—they don't get along at all."

we've been able to maintain a level of consistency that has been very satisfying. We're still coming up with ideas the excite us... and thankfully they seem to excite the fans as well."

There's no doubt that despite whatever this unit may still accomplish (and make no mistake about it, they're still out there somewhere on the road slogging away even as you read this), their most significant contributions to the heavy metal lexicon—and their most significant internal battles—happened decades ago. Indeed, this is a band whose inner feuds have

been as much the part of their history as their music. Fact is, Gillan's in-again, out-again relationship with the band has formed as much of a benchmark of Purple's creative and commercial peaks as Blackmore's own predilections. During Gillan's first tenure with the group in the early '70s, the lineup produced most of their classic albums. But following a few disappointing discs, the long-haired frontman split—to be replaced by a then-unknown David Coverdale. While Coverdale's efforts on albums such as 1976's *Burn* were noteworthy, Purple never attained the stellar heights they enjoyed with Gillan, and by 1978, Purple had disbanded.

But then, in 1984—after the group members had played together in various incarnations of Whitesnake and Rainbow—Deep Purple's "classic" lineup reformed for the comeback album *Perfect Strangers*, which proved to be one of the band's most inspired and successful efforts. However, a few years later, Gillan again felt the need to roam, and while Purple continued on, the band's hard rockin' engine had apparently run out of steam. As almost always seems to be the case with Purple, though, all roads eventually lead back to the band, and by

the early-'90s Gillan was back aboard, only to see Blackmore leave a short time later.

"Roger and I are very close," Lord said. "We often hung out together. Ritchie, on the other hand, always tended to keep very much to himself. And you'd never find Ritchie and Gillan together—they don't get along at all."

Despite all of their internal bickering, however, once they hit stage during their heyday, any private squabbles appeared to be forgotten. At the peak of their mid-'70s power—when the Purple People stood proudly as the Kings of the Hard Rock World—when the house lights went down and the stage lights went up, it was near impossible to find a more cohesive, talented and entertaining band than Deep Purple. And, as they tour the world for the zillionth time, they seem content in knowing that their place in the rock pantheon is very much secure. Nothing it seems can remove the sheen from what this legendary outfit has accomplished; they are still the Highway Stars.

"If we didn't still feel relevant, and know that we could still do it, we wouldn't be out there," Lord said. "We enjoy it, and we enjoy knowing that we're still capable of playing up to both the fans' expectations and our own."



I should as it may be to believe, when **Led Zeppelin** released their self-titled debut album in the winter of 1968, many in the music press absolutely hated it. Great expectations had been held for this new creation put together former **Yardbirds** guitarist **Jimmy Page**, but when **Led Zeppelin** emerged, it was labeled as everything from "derivative" to "bombastic" to "arrogant" in truth, it was all that... and more. What **Page**, **vocalist Robert Plant**, **drummer John (Bonzo) Bonham** and **bassist John Paul Jones** had managed to do was the rock and roll equivalent of reinventing the wheel. They had taken musical styles, attitudes and approaches as old as musical itself and turned the ancient formulas inside out.

By taking old blues licks by greats like **W. C. Dixie** and **Robert Johnson**, adding their own distinct European artistic flavorings, and then simply amping up the whole message beyond the point of immediate recognition, **Zeppelin** had created an entirely new musical form. What those short-sighted critics had labeled as "unimaginative" quickly proved to be just the opposite: it was the perfect musical style with which to herald rock's new age. It was loud, it was brash, it was the opiate of the masses. Perhaps more than anything else, it was **Led Zeppelin**.

"I remember the first time we all got together," **Jones** stated. "We met in an old London rehearsal room and we had quite a bit of our gear set up there. I knew **Jimmy** from some of our session work, most notably with **Donovan**. I had met

Robert and **Bonzo** briefly before that. So these four relative strangers got together one evening, plugged in their instruments and started to jam. I remember **Jimmy** saying to me to 'just play a blues beat'. The song we went into was an old **Yardbirds** number, *Train Kept A'Rolling*, and I remember the whole room just exploding with sound. You couldn't wipe the smiles off our faces for a week."

From their tumultuous early days, it didn't take **Zeppelin** long to establish themselves as the preeminent rock and roll band on the planet. Back in the late '60s it took a little longer for a band to develop a following; after all, **MTV** was still a dozen years from becoming a reality and even the then-infant **FM radio** format was somewhat resistant to play what it viewed as overly raucous music. The only way a band could get heard was the "old fashioned way"—by going directly to the people on never-ending world tours. Such was the path that **Zeppelin** took, opening shows for anyone brave enough to have them on their tour, including such bands as **Iron Butterfly** and **Country Joe and the Fish**. But it didn't take **Zep** long to blossom from "support act" status to headliners, and by the time their second disc, *Led Zeppelin II*, was released in late '69, the world was already their oyster.

"Things moved incredibly smoothly for us," **Page** recalled. "We had a manager, **Peter Grant**, who was able to make things happen. And it was our belief that once we had the chance to play in front of an audience we could win them over. About the only problem we had in the early days was when the **Countess Von Zeppelin** saw the cover of our first album and almost made us change our name. But by the time the second album came out, I think we all sensed that nothing could stop us."

No one had ever heard anything like **Led Zeppelin's** late '60s albums. In an age when loosely structured 20-minute jams were standard operating procedure, **Zeppelin's** hard-hitting bursts of pure rock energy were like a call-to-arms for a generation. Filled with lusty tales of love and conquest, and featuring the most intense instrumental attack ever heard, such early **Zeppelin** masterworks as *Communication Breakdown*, *Whole Lotta Love* and *Good Times, Bad Times*, were revolutionary in both concept and design. Perhaps only the **Beatles**, working in a radically different musical format, had as big an impact on their chosen style of rock as **Zeppelin** had on theirs. By the time their second album finished its meteoric path to the top of the charts, **Zeppelin** found themselves to be the hottest act in the world—the largest grossing concert attraction in rock history.

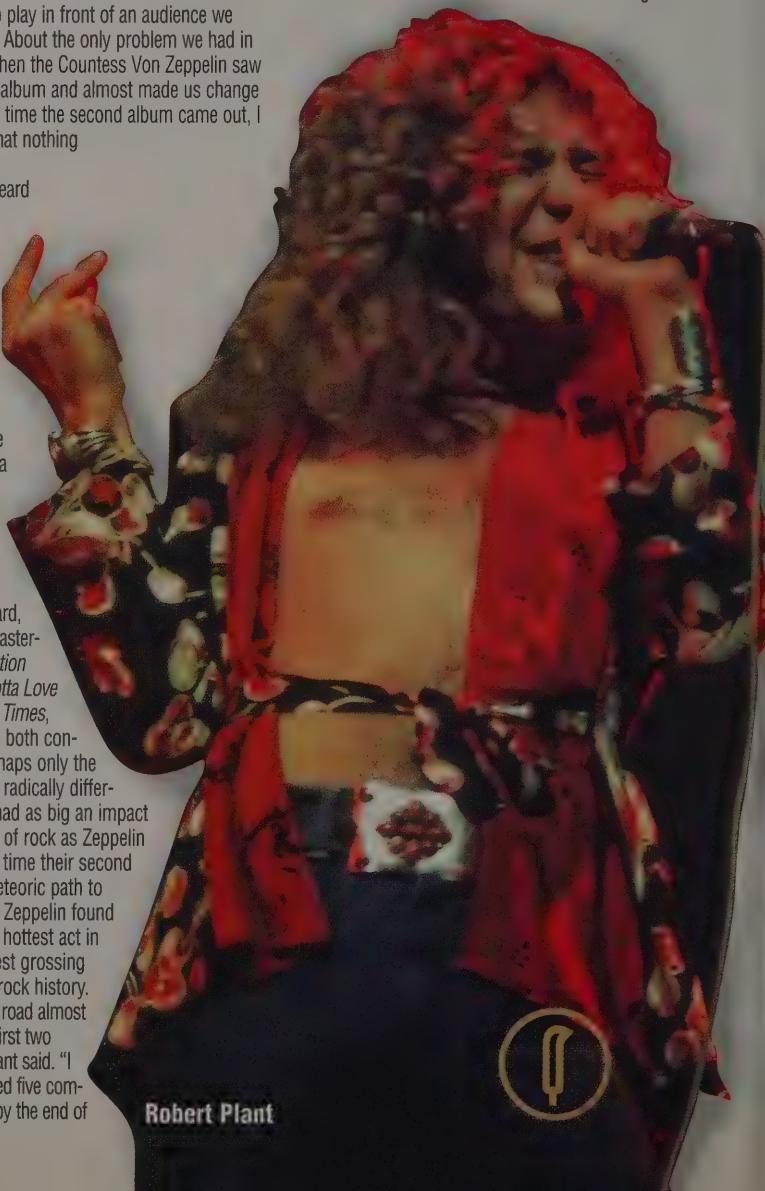
"We stayed on the road almost continually when the first two albums came out," **Plant** said. "I think we had completed five complete American tours by the end of

1969! In retrospect it's amazing that we even survived that ordeal. But the fact is that we loved every second of it."

Indeed they did, and as they spent time on the road, **Zeppelin** was establishing precedents that *every* future rock act would attempt to emulate. Their dealings with groupies, their hotel-destroying exploits and the dabbling in all manner of bizarre substances quickly became the stuff of legend. The tales have been passed down from generation to generation with code words like "mud shark" or "plaster caster" gaining instant grins of recognition from those in-the-know. It was a lascivious lifestyle in an era before AIDS turned such activities into human games of Russian roulette. As **Plant** recalls, in their heyday, life was a never-ending party for **Led Zeppelin** that only ended when they prepared to go on stage each night.

"We were young, and we were healthy, and all manner of temptation was being placed at our feet," he said. "There's was never even a thought of resistance. It was all part of the world we were totally caught up within."

Following the chaos created by their constant recording and touring schedules during their first two years, the band took a short vacation before recording their historic next album, *Led Zeppelin III*. It was the disc that began showing the band's growth, the evolutionary steps that would soon turn **Zep's** calling card from that of **The Kings Of**



Robert Plant

Bombast to the masters of all musical forms. For those who had come to expect the three-chord riffs that characterized those initial recordings, the more cerebral, controlled approach used on songs like *Gallows Pole* and *That's The Way* was something of a shock. But when criticism came their way, expressing "concern" that Zeppelin had grown soft, Page could only giggle at the notion.

"We had time to think about what we were doing for the third album," he said. "We really didn't have that luxury before. We wanted to expand and see what we could do. It wasn't a conscious decision on our part, it was just a natural development."

Despite III's differing approach, the Zeppelin juggernaut continued on unabated. Their tours continued to gross more and more money, and their albums became instant best sellers. It was as if the band could do no wrong. But the pressures of competing with himself were beginning to get to Page. Always a brilliant businessman as well as a rock historian, the dark haired guitarist realized that he had been handed a unique opportunity to make a musical statement for the ages. While on the road in Japan he set about creating a song that would serve as his crowning musical creation, the song that Led Zeppelin would be remembered for through the ages. When Zeppelin finally reentered the studio to record their next disc, the quixotic untitled album that has come to be known as *Zeppelin IV*, he felt ready to lay down that song. At first it was little more than a series of disjointed musical movements with a building crescendo of instruments. After weeks of work it became more streamlined and focused. And when the recording was completed, it was known as *Stairway To Heaven*.

"People always ask me if we all sensed that *Stairway* was something special while we were working on it," Jones said. "To be honest, the answer is no. We all knew that Jimmy was working on something special, and we had heard snippets of song parts, but we didn't know how they would fit together. Once we heard what we had created when the recording was finished we did know it was special. It was everything that Led Zeppelin was to be."

With their legacy firmly entrenched in rock history, Zeppelin set out to conquer new frontiers. During the early '70s the band members took increasingly long vacations away from each other, absorbing various cultures as they sojourned across the planet. One particularly open to new influences proved to be Plant, who began spending more and more time in such exotic ports-of-call as India and Morocco. Many of those influences popped up on the group's next album, *Houses Of The Holy*, one of the group's most complex and eclectic efforts. While some long-time fans bemoaned the group's apparent reliance on meandering song structures, numbers like *The Rain Song* seemed to take on a

life of their own once they were performed on the concert stage.

"Many of the songs served as a springboard on stage," Page related. "There was no point in simply recreating the album versions when you played live. We wanted to expand them and see where they went. That was part of Zeppelin's live excitement. Nobody knew exactly what sounds would emerge that night—including us."

The hectic recording schedule that characterized the band's first five years began to change after *Houses Of The Holy*. It would be over two years before the group's next album, the two-record set, *Physical Graffiti*, was released in March, 1975. But it wasn't as if the band's members had taken a rest from the creative process. On each and every track of *PG* the imprint of artistic passion could be felt—even if those efforts occasionally failed to hit the mark. At this point in their career, the last thing Zeppelin wanted to do was live off of past glories; their goal was to continually traverse new musical terrain, to follow the *Star Trek* credo of going where no band had gone before. On stage, the band was never better, with old and new material melding into a magical mix of rock reactants. Some of those special moments were captured at tour's end for the film *The Song Remains The Same*.

"I've always had mixed emotions about the movie," Plant said. "Parts are wonderful, others are somewhat



overindulgent. But then there are those who will say that overindulgence is the very definition of Led Zeppelin."

To follow that overindulgent bent, prior to beginning work on their next album, *Presence*, in 1976, Zeppelin decided to do something radical. They made the decision to start their own record label, Swan Song, and sign a variety of friends including Roy Harper, Maggie Bell and Bad Company. Of course, the most important band on the Swan Song roster was Led Zeppelin, and with their own label behind them, the band decided to try their most experimental work on *Presence*. Much of the album's nomadic, uncentered feel is due to the fact that the band members worked mostly on their own during the writing process, with Plant recovering from an auto accident in California, and Page residing in a variety of places due to his new-found status as a British tax exile.

"Those were unusual times," Jones said. "Robert had suffered a horrendous auto crash, and we all were somewhat nomadic because of the tax question. All those elements flavored *Presence*, though I think the album had some outstanding moments."

It would be three years until Led Zeppelin would reenter the recording studio with only the release of *The Song Remains The Same* movie—and its accompanying album—to fill the void for Zeppelinophiles. They did tour America in 1977, a road trip that was initially delayed due to Plant contracting a nasty case of tonsillitis and later cut short when the singer's young son, Karac, died of a mysterious stomach ailment. The rock press of the era went to great lengths trying to establish some sort of "Zeppelin Curse," noting Page's well-known fondness for the occult might be at the root of this situation. Of course, all this proved to be total rubbish, but when Bonham was to die four years later, talk of *The Curse* again reared its ugly head. Those 1977 tour dates would prove to be the band's last in America.

His son's death cast a pall of depression over Plant that lasted for the better part of two years. In fact, at times there was talk that Zeppelin's career was over due to both the singer's unwillingness to continue and Page's inability to kick his ever-increasing drug dependencies. But, finally, in late 1978 the band once again gathered in Stockholm, Sweden to begin work on their next album, *In Through The Out Door*. Due to the problems of his bandmates, Jones was more in control of the album than anyone else, and his diligence brought out the best in everyone. Working hard and fast, the entire recording process was completed in three weeks, and such tracks as *In The Evening* emerged as among the best in band history. But there were bad vibes abounding, though no one could place their finger on exactly what the problem was. Perhaps it was age, perhaps it was years of a decadent lifestyle, but those on the scene sensed that Led Zeppelin was headed for trouble.

"I don't know if we knew anything other than that we were making new music and playing new tours," Jones said. "But we were older and had other responsibilities in our lives. It really was that simple."

In Through The Out Door was released in August, 1979, and the band soon played their first live shows in two years in Copenhagen, Denmark. Things seemed to be going well, "a nail-biting well." The record proved to be a best-seller, receiving four-star reviews around the world, and talk of the band's first U.S. tour since their ill-fated 1977 trek was on everyone's lips. A full-scale European tour was launched in early 1980, with the band playing as *Intoxication* at a sold-out

"In RETROSPECT IT'S AMAZING THAT WE EVEN SURVIVED THAT ORDEAL. BUT THE FACT IS THAT WE LOVED EVERY SECOND OF IT."

during a set that frequently ran over three hours. British fans everywhere rioted, and American Zoo heads, in particular, refused to sell their official tour dates. More announcements.

That tour would never happen. On September 24, 1980, shortly after rehearsals for that American tour, John Bonham started downing shots of vodka. It is estimated that he downed over 40 shots during a 12-hour stretch. He went home to his newly purchased estate outside of London and went to sleep. He never woke up. The next day his body was discovered in his bed. Four months later, after much rumor and speculation, the surviving band members issued this brief statement.

"The loss of our dear friend, and the deep sense of harmony felt by ourselves and our manager, have led us to decide that we could not continue as we were."

Hit Parader Salutes The '70s 1970-1979 British Legends

SLADE THE NOIZE BOYS

While many Slade-style hard rock fans may not instantly recognize the name in image of Slade, there's no question that American rock supporters are very familiar with the band's music. Unfortunately, the vast majority of rockers know such purposefully misspelled tunes as *Cum On Feel the Noize* and *Mama Weer All Crazee Now* more than their now-for-nute mid-'80s *Quiet Riot* interpretations than from the far more spirited early-'70s originals. But the fact is that no matter how one may know of Slade's energetic, powerful, sing-along anthems, there's no doubt that from the moment of their birth in the post-Beatles late '60s, right up through their various projects of recent vintage, these English glam/metal aces continually proved themselves to be one of the most entertaining and compelling bands of their rock and roll era.

During their early-'70s Golden Age, when such songs as *Skewes Me Please Me* and *Get Down Tonight* kept them perpetually at the top of the European charts, there was no question that guitarist/vocalist Noddy Holder, bassist Jimmy Lea, guitarist Dave Hill and drummer Don Powell had created a sound that was as unique as anything any hard rock band had ever put forth. Blending stony guitar-driven rhythms with Holder's sandpaper-and-broken-glass vocal style, Slade's music was as infectious as it was different. At a time when "art rock" still ruled, and

pompous, over-the-top instrumental excess seemed to permeate every pore of the rock machine, Slade's short, urgent, bombastic bursts of pure hard rock energy proudly stood out from the rock rabble like snow on a summer's day.

"It's never been particularly easy to describe the music of Slade," Hill said. "It's always been a combination of influences, as well as a combination of the personalities of the people involved. We've always liked to believe that when you heard one of our songs you knew who it was right away."

Starting out musical life in the English Midlands as the N'Betweeners, by 1968 this quartet had changed their name to Ambrose Slade (a name that lasted for about a year before being shortened to the more tongue-tripping Slade) and taken on a big-time manager, Chas Chandler, who at that time also happened to be managing none other than Jimi Hendrix. In an attempt to stand out from the crowd, Slade initially adopted a "skin head" look in order to cash in on a youth fashion phenomenon of the late '60s. But with British

officials desperately trying to cut back on soccer hooliganism, and the skin head image being directly tied to the primary perpetrators of stadium violence, it was quickly decided for the band to grow out their locks and take on a more "glam rock" appearance. It was a logical decision in light of the success then being enjoyed by such upstart attractions as the Sweet, T. Rex and David Bowie. But despite any outwardly "glam" appearance, Slade's rough-'n-ready sound, and blue collar looks betrayed their true musical instincts. This was a hard rock band whose debut album title, 1970's *Play It Loud*, told the *real* story surrounding this unit's musical perspectives.

"Slade may have wanted to be 'glam', but their sound was just too heavy," said a long-time observer of the English rock scene. "And, to be honest, they just weren't 'pretty' enough. Noddy looked like a character straight from a Dickens novel, and Don looked like an athlete, so they didn't have that somewhat androgynous look that was so popular with many rock stars of the time."

They may have been short on androgyny,



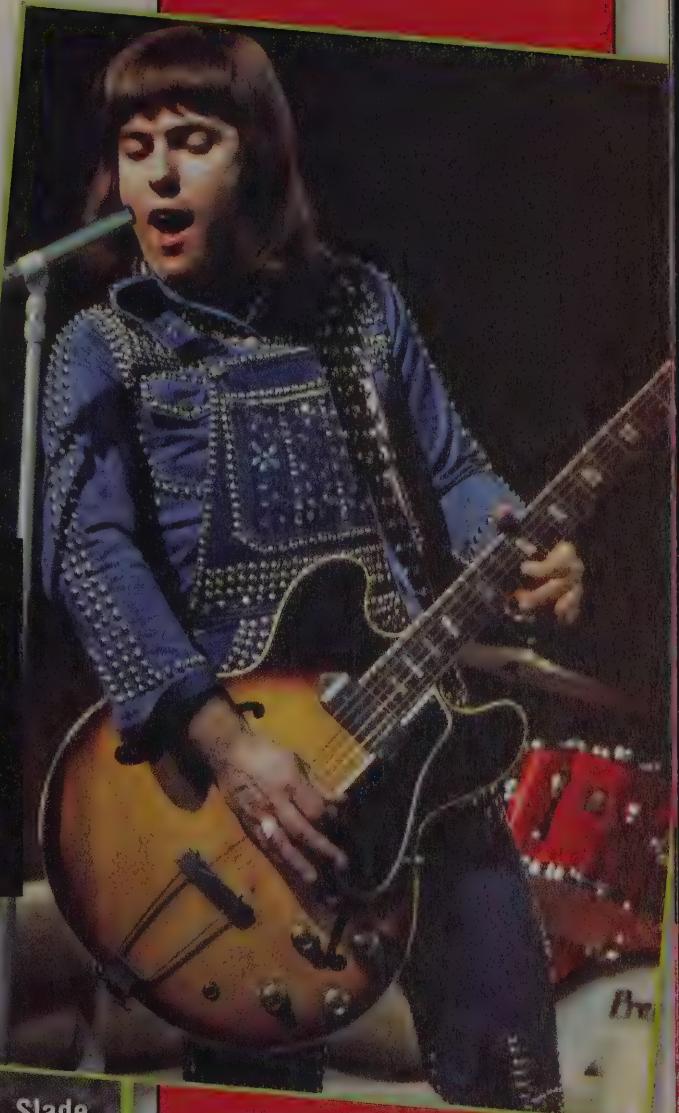
but Slade was unquestionably "long" on foot-stomping fun. Especially on stage—where their highly theatrical shows hit high gear, and Holder's top-hatted, tartan-wearing image became an iconic look throughout Europe—Slade's live appearances became instant sell-outs, almost single-handedly issuing in the arrival of the now-traditional "arena rock" approach. But while the band enjoyed unprecedented press support and fan reaction throughout the Continent (where they produced #1 singles at a rate previously equaled only by the Beatles), on this side of the Atlantic it was a far different story. While repeated American tours served to slowly increase the group's following, even at the peak of their early-'70s fame, Slade was little more than a curiosity to the same State-side fans that had helped turn the likes of Bowie and T. Rex into international sensations.

"It was rather frustrating," Hill said. "We began spending more and more time in the States, and the results didn't always justify the effort. We could have been playing huge shows throughout Europe when we were re-

gated to relatively small halls in America. But our management and record company thought it was important, so we did it... and we enjoyed it. It all just never produced quite the results we were hoping for."

While they were working hard to break through on American shores, something interesting was occurring back home. The English

"Our music has always been a combination of influences, as well as a combination of the personalities involved."



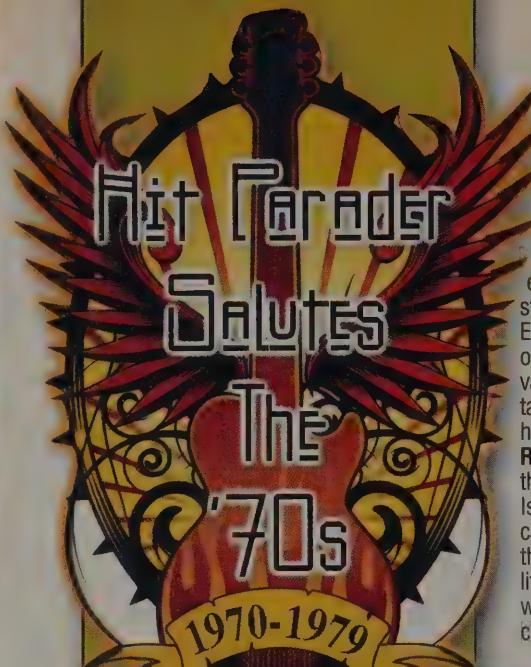
Slade



PHOTOS: LAURENS VAN HOUTEN / FRANK WHITE PHOTO AGENCY

music scene of the mid-'70s was rather rapidly beginning to change, and after the release of their successful "rockumentary" movie, *Flame*, in 1975, Slade began to notice a growing sense that their time in the spotlight was rapidly drawing to a close. By the time they released the ironically titled *What Ever Happened to Slade?* in 1977, the first vestiges of both the "new wave" and punk music revolutions had begun, leaving Slade's rowdy-yet-predictable style somewhat in the dust. Yet despite losing their top-rung status in the hearts and minds of their faithful Euro fans, Slade continued to hang on, producing albums at almost yearly intervals throughout the '80s (which included a few hit singles such as *Runaway*) and touring regularly. Finally, in 1991, after 25 years at the band's helm, Holder decided to quit the band and start a mildly successful career as a character actor. Lea soon retired, leaving Hill and Powell to continue on... which they've done to this very day.

"We called the band Slade II for a while after Noddy and Jim left," Hill said. "But then Noddy agreed that we should still be called Slade—even with some new members. Hopefully the fans who have seen us, whether they remember us from the '70s or weren't even born at that time, are enjoying the fact that we're still doing our best to keep this music alive."



THE SCORPIONS ROCKIN' LIKE A HURRICANE

While their greatest acclaim may have come in the *Rock You Like A Hurricane* '80s, and while they're still at the top of their hard rockin' game on their new disc, *Humanity Hour 1*, there's no doubt that the Scorpions also ruled as the most successful Continental Metal band of the '70s. On such early albums as *Fly to the Rainbow* and *In Trance*, these German greats laid down the structural foundation that would later emerge on such break-through efforts as *Blackout* and *Animal Magnetism*. The distinctive vocals of Klaus Meine, in conjunction with the band's guitar-powered sound (featuring stalwart rhythm player Rudolf Schenker and lead masters that have included Michael Schenker, Uli Roth and most notably, Matthias Jabs) has served to influence generations of aspiring rockers. Quite clearly, for more than 30 years this European hard rock machine has been blazing a unique swath across the face of the contemporary music world. And leading that charge has been the Gibson-inspired guitar attack of the band's two axe masters, Schenker and Jabs. With Schenker's vast array of vintage "Flying Vs" and Jabs' collection of classic "Explorers" ranking among the most recognizable trademarks of these Teutonic greats, we figured we'd sit down with these two six-string legends to discuss their guitar predilections.

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Hit Parader: Both of you are so closely associated with Gibson guitars. Do you ever have the desire to experiment a little?

Matthias Jabs: Honestly, no. I have a variety of different guitars, but the ones I play on stage are all Gibsons. My favorites are Explorers. I have a number of those, and each one is just a little bit different, so I have enough variety among them. I'm happy with those guitars, and I've not found any others that I am as happy with.

Rudolf Schenker: I think there is an expression that if something isn't broken, you don't fix it. Is that right? Well, that is certainly true in our case. I've been playing the Flying V for more than 30 years, and it is a big part of my rock life. I don't think I'd feel comfortable on stage without it. The sound the guitar gets is very critical to the

whole style of the Scorpions, and the way the guitar looks is still wonderful. It's hard for me to believe that they've been making those for so long! They look so modern.

HP: How many "Vs" do you own?

RS: I think it's around 18. But some are on the road, some in my studio, and some are in

Klaus Meine



Matthias Jabs (l) &
Rudolf Schenker

"I THINK THERE IS AN EXPRESSION THAT IF SOMETHING IS BROKEN, YOU DON'T FIX IT. IS THAT RIGHT?"



The Scorpions in their late '70s prime.

my home, so I'm not totally sure. I believe it's one of the largest collection of vintage Flying Vs around. And I play all of them! I think it would be a shame to have so many wonderful guitars and not use them. I think I'd rather give them away than have them never used.

MJ: I think he must have more "Vs" than that! Sometimes it seems like he has a different one with him every day in the studio. But he does try and use many of them, though I know he has a few favorites.

RS: That is true, there is one particular black and white one that I love. I play that one on stage all the time, and it's on all of our albums. I also play a white one that has a wonderful sound.

HP: Is there a particular year that most of the guitars you play were made?

RS: Most of them are at least 35 years old. The white one I was just talking about is a 1967 model—a classic! I think I have one from every year the "V" was manufactured, which is something I set out to do when I first started collecting them. I really only have interest in the classic original models. The reissues I'm sure are very good, but they're not of much interest to me.

HP: You have one of the most clearly defined rhythm/lead pairings in rock with

Rudolf playing rhythm and Matthias taking the leads. Does it *always* work that way?

MJ: Let's say it usually works that way. But Rudolf occasionally plays a lead on an album or on stage. In fact, I think he's quite a good lead player, but he seems to really enjoy playing rhythm guitar more. I play rhythm at times during most of our songs, along with Rudolf, but I do enjoy playing the leads breaks, the solos. They really give you a chance to express yourself.

RS: I've never felt limited by playing rhythm guitar. It's what I have always done best. When I was young, and my brother Michael and I were first putting this band together, I naturally played rhythm because he was so much more gifted as a lead guitarist. I never felt a particular need to play solos. I was happy playing rhythm guitar then, and I'm happy doing it now.

HP: Rudolf, you've played with a number of great guitarists over the years—your brother and Uli Roth as well as Matthias. Do you have to change your style to work with different guitarists?

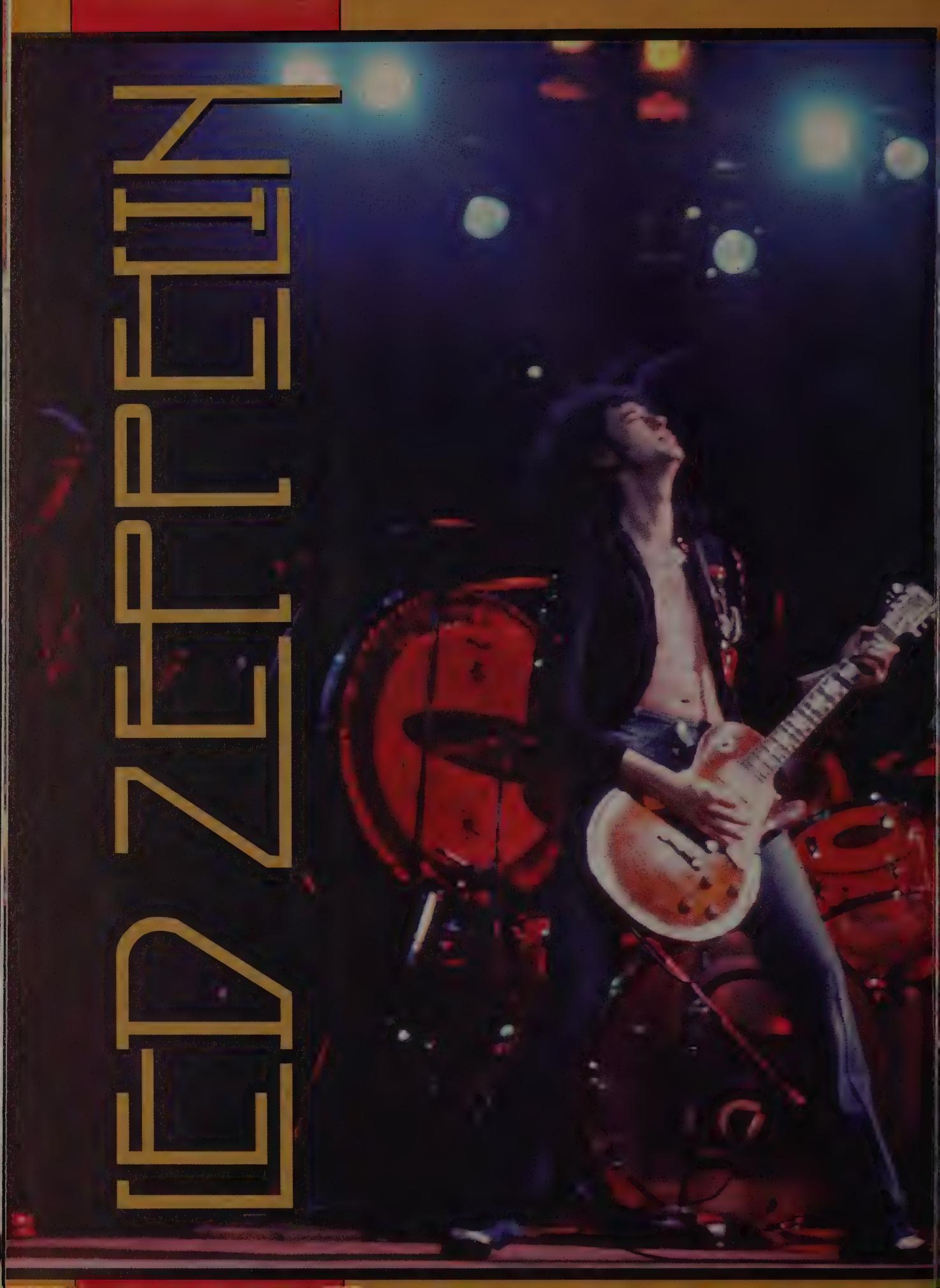
RS: No. I believe *they* were usually the ones who had to change their playing a bit to fit into the Scorpions. I know that when Matthias joined the band about 25 years ago, there was naturally a period of transition for him, as well as for us. But he certainly adapted quickly and well.

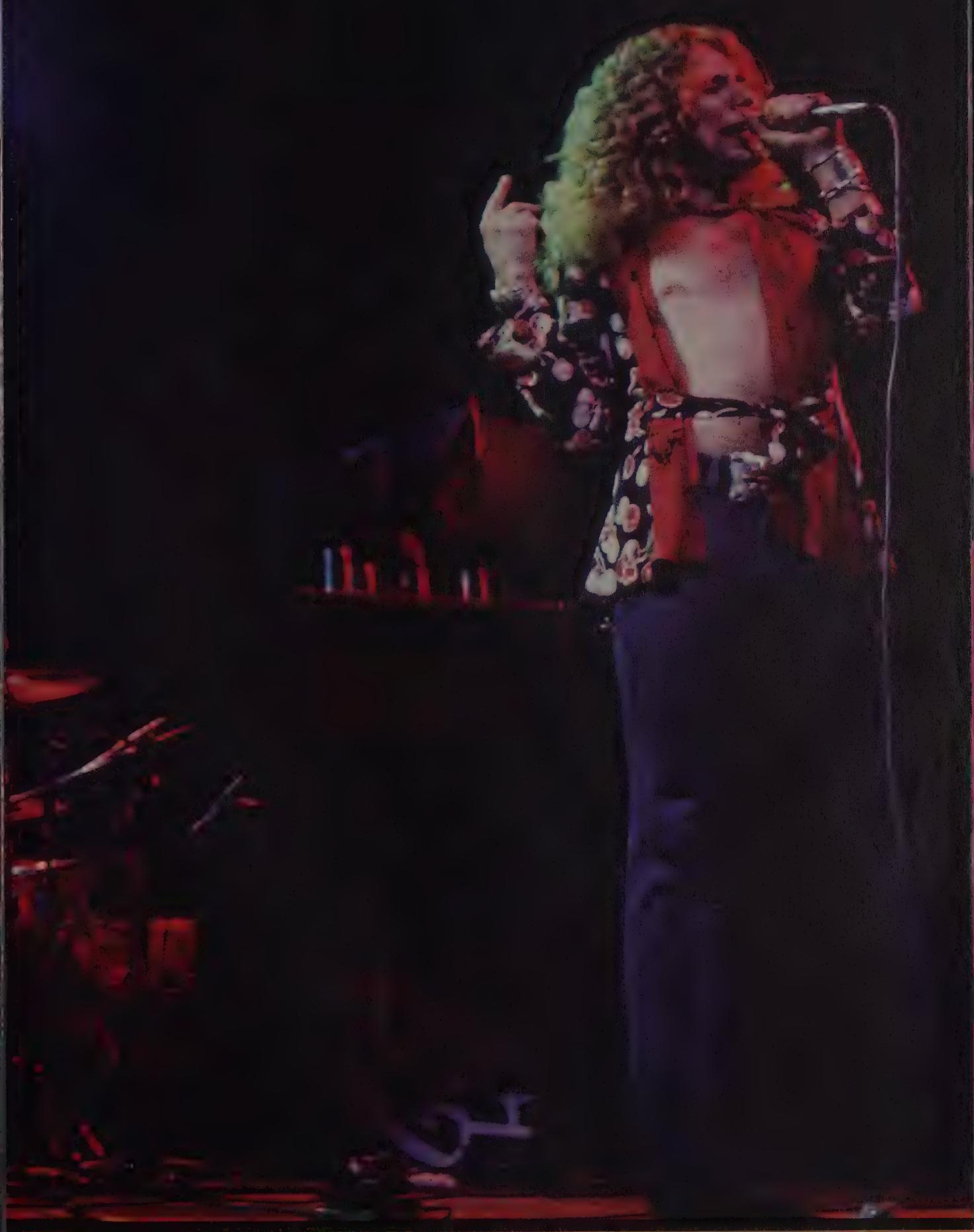
MJ: When you join the Scorpions, I guarantee that *you* are the one required to make any changes. Rudolf's guitar work is the foundation of this band, and that's not about to change for anything or anyone.

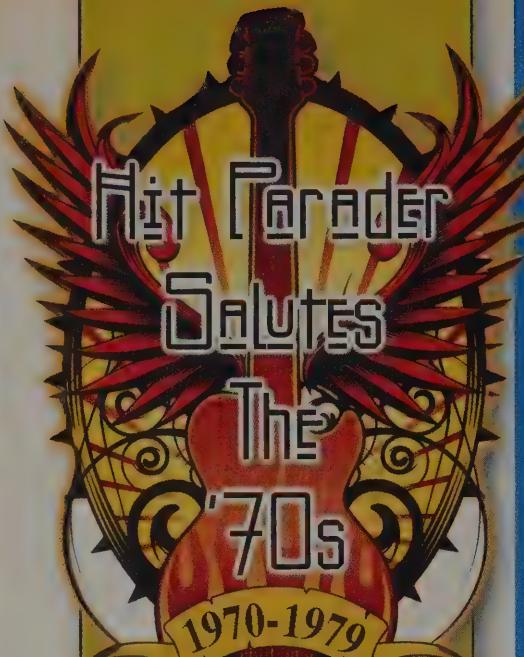
HP: Matthias, earlier you mentioned that playing a guitar solo gives you a chance to express yourself. Do your solos change on stage from night to night?

MJ: Some of my solos change more than others. There are some, like on *Rock You Like A Hurricane*, that stay mostly the same every night because they really play an important part in the song's structure. On other songs, there is more of a chance to try a few new things. It changes a bit from night to night, but there is no great experimentation going on at every show.

RS: We feel that many of the fans are expecting a song to sound a certain way, and we like to give them what they want. We're not trying to play every song note-for-note off of the album when we play it live, but we don't feel it necessary to take a four minute song and turn it into a ten minute song. But the Scorpions have always built their reputation on being an exciting live act, and one of the reasons for that is that we don't mind doing whatever is necessary to make the show a memorable experience for everyone there.







International Metal Masters

RUSH

BRAINS & BRAWN

Rush has always been a "different" type of hard rock band. For more than 30 years this legendary Canadian power trio—comprised of bassist/vocalist Geddy Lee, drummer/lyricist Neil Peart and guitarist Alex Lifeson—has blazed a trail unlike any other band on the contemporary music landscape. With their penchant for creating complex, multi-layered rock opuses and putting on some of the greatest stage shows in rock history, Rush has certainly made their mark on the hard rock world. Today, with the release of their latest disc *Snakes & Arrows*, Rush have further established their artistic identity in the 21st Century—while steadfastly holding on to many of the concepts and philosophies that made them one of the previous century's most hallowed acts. Recently we discussed Rush past, present and future with the ever-informative Mr. Lee.

Hit Parader: How do you view Rush's state-of-musical-mind in 2007?

Geddy Lee: I think we're in a very good state. We went through a very tough period of few years ago. There were things that happened in our personal lives that made us wonder if Rush would ever work together again. For a long time Neil understandably just didn't have any desire to think about music. But after a while, he began to realize that music was still something he loved, and from that point on we began to move forward. We haven't

stopped since. Now, with *Snakes & Ladders* we've created an album that represents something truly special to us.

HP: What can you still add to Rush's creative spectrum?

GL: Each album we've ever done has had very individual elements, but when you look at it as a whole, it's still very much a Rush album. One of the things we never set out to do is top ourselves or mimic what we've done in the past. When we get together to make music, that's exactly what we do. It's a creative process that yields a variety of results. Some may be instantly familiar to Rush fans while some others may not. Taken as a whole, however, they represent the culmination of who and what we are.

HP: Over the last few discs you've started to co-produce your own albums. Why?

GL: We've come to the realization that nobody

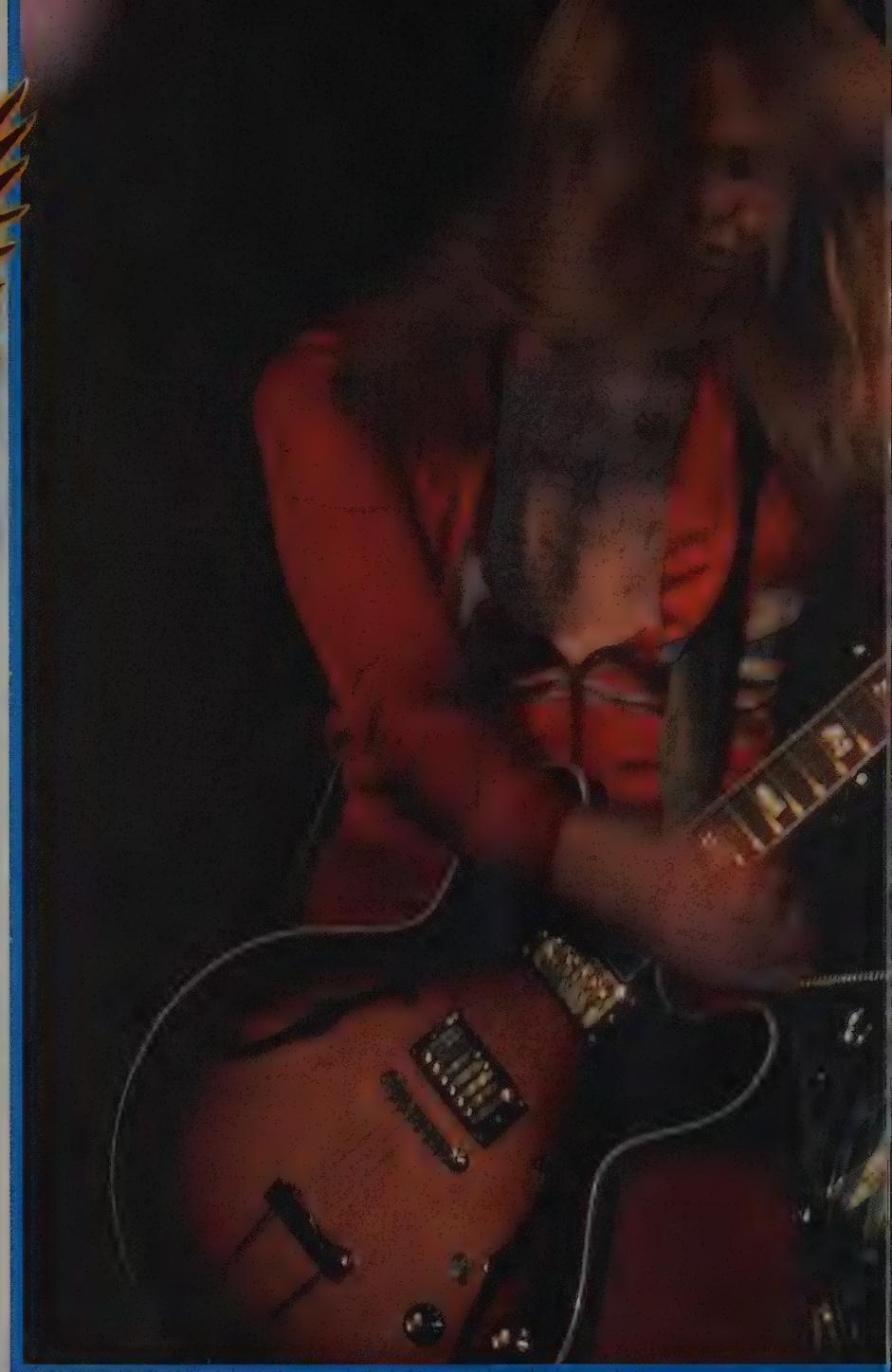
knows what Rush is supposed to sound like better than we do. We've worked with some great producers over the years, but we've come to rely on our own opinions as much as anyone's. On this one we co-produced with Nick Raskulinecz, and it worked out very well.

HP: As you look back over Rush's career, how do you see the band's music having changed?

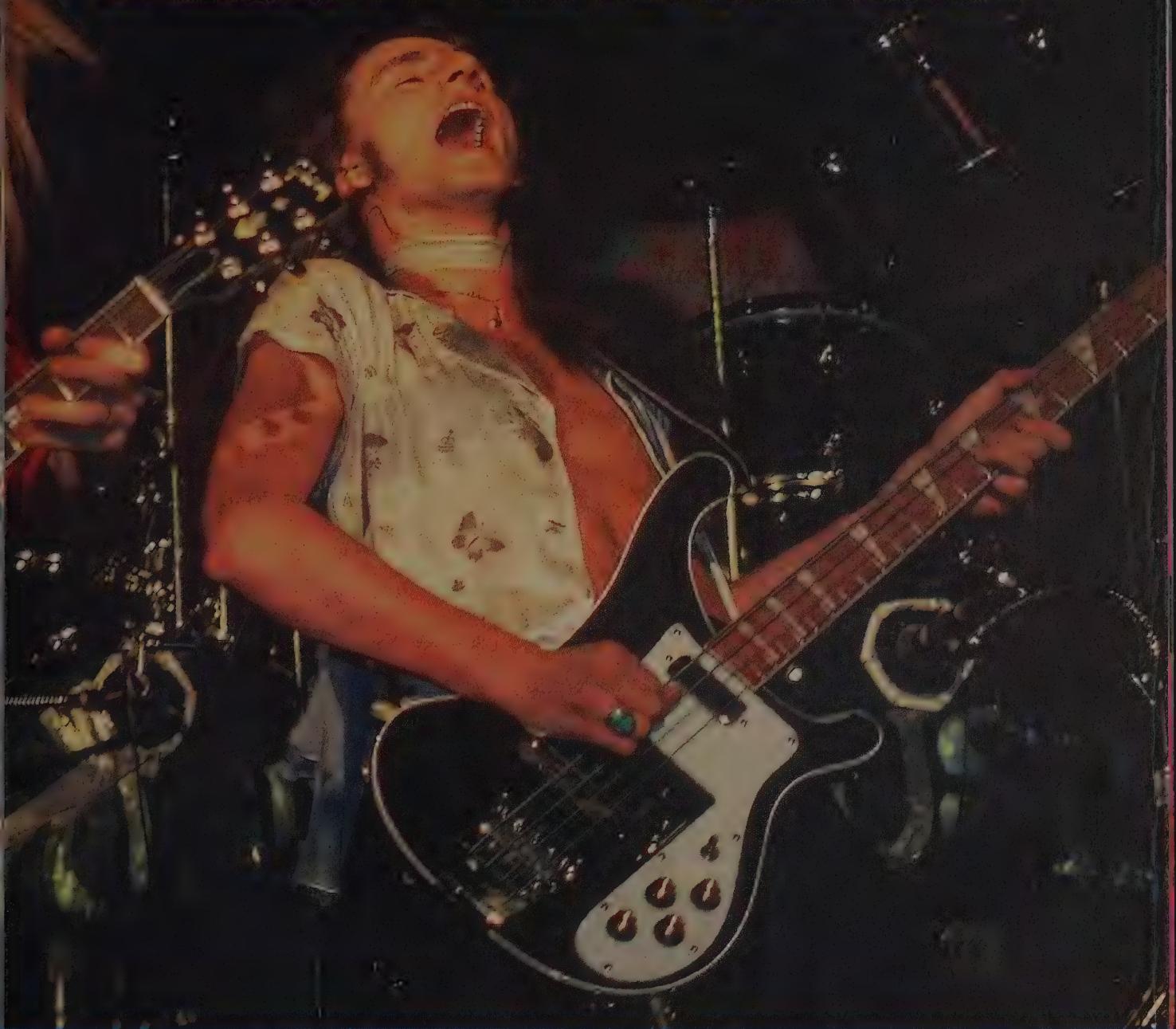
GL: Whatever changes have taken place have all been part of a fairly natural evolutionary process. I can't think of a time that we ever went out of our way to try and fit into any particular trend that was sweeping through the rock world. We've maintained a true belief in what we've done, and I feel our fans have appreciated that.

HP: Rush has been around for nearly 35 years, does that fact amaze you?

GL: In some ways it definitely does. Sometimes it seems like we just started out yesterday, and at



"Each album we've ever done has had very individual elements, but when you look at it as a whole, it's still very much a Rush album."



other times it seems like we've been around even longer than that. But we still have a great passion for music and a great passion for this band. Over the years we've learned how to pace ourselves, when to take breaks, and how to keep everything fresh and exciting.

HP: Do you still enjoy touring as much as you ever did?

GL: We love playing together, but staying away from home, your family and your other duties can become tougher as you get a little older. It's not like when you're 21 and you can't wait to throw your gear in the back of a van and just head out to wherever the road takes you. These days a tour takes so much planning that it's truly a labor... of love.

HP: You used to record every live show. Do you still do that?

GL: We've always tended to record shows, more

for our own edification than anything else. So we've had a catalog of live shows going back quite a long time. With music like ours, it's important to keep a monitor on things to hear how a song sounds and what we perhaps can do better. It's easy to start playing certain parts of songs too quickly when you're on stage.

HP: In addition to your love for music, your passion for baseball has been well noted; you even sang the Canadian national anthem at the 1994 all-star game. Do you collect baseball memorabilia?

GL: As a matter of fact I've got quite a collection of rare autographed baseballs. The most valuable ones I have include a ball that has the signatures of both Lou Gehrig and Babe Ruth. I also have a ball signed by Ty Cobb, and I recently picked one up that was signed by Cy Young.

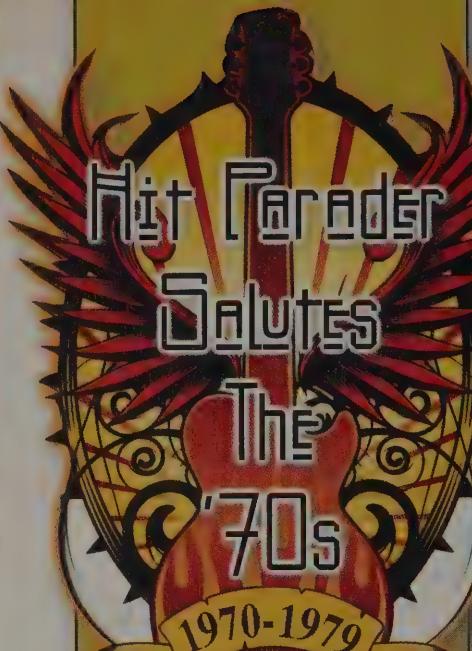
HP: Those are all stars of baseball's past. Do

you collect items from today's stars as well?

GL: I have some, but I think I'm more attracted to the items from the stars from an earlier era. I've been lucky to get to know quite a few of today's players and it's great that some of them have as much respect for Rush as I have for baseball.

HP: What other hobbies do you have?

GL: I've always had a passion for photography, but recently I haven't worked with my cameras as much as I have in the past. My other passion is travel. I like to combine those two interests by going on nature safaris all over the world. In recent years my family and I have been to East Africa and Nepal, and those were amazing trips. When you can take photographs of wildlife in their natural environment, it's just an incredible experience.



International Metal Masters

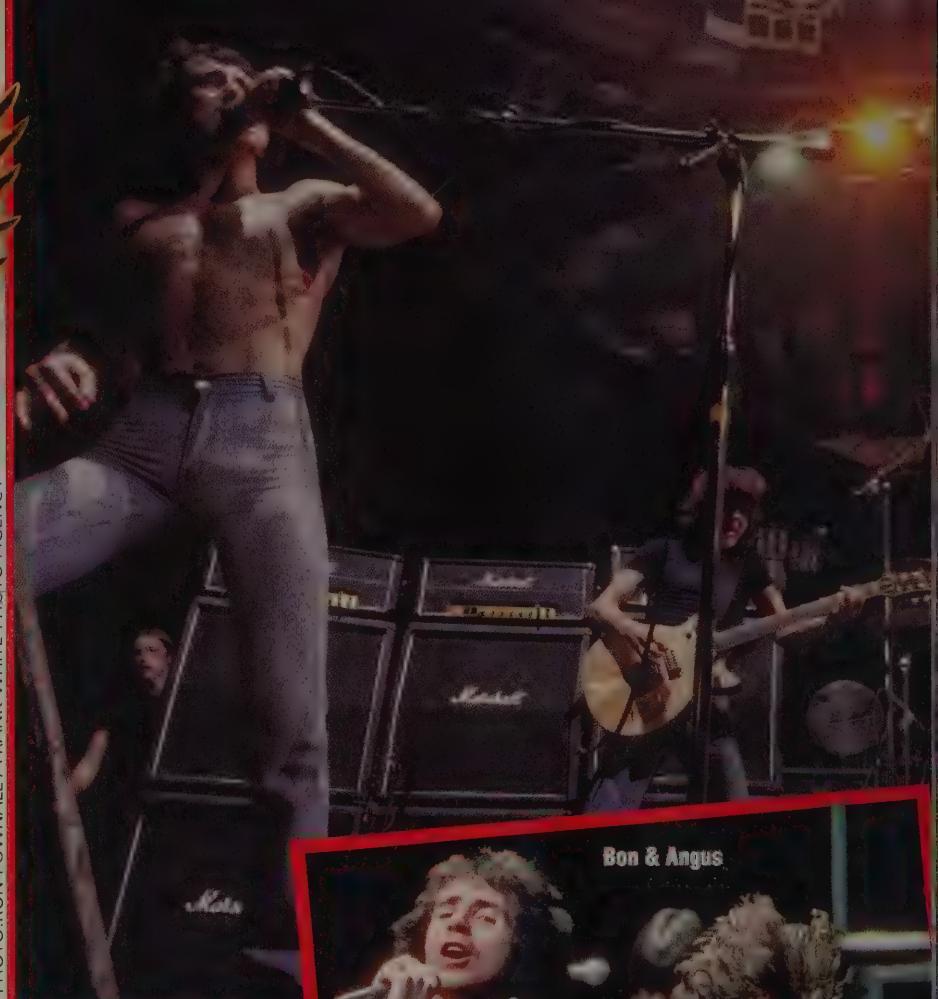
AC/DC

THUNDER & LIGHTNING

No one in the rock world had ever seen anything quite like it before. The year was 1978 and AC/DC were on their first tour of the United States. They had already created quite a splash in Europe where their blistering three-chord guitar anthems had been welcomed with open arms by the Continent's rock-starved masses. Few on this side of the "Big Pond", however, had a clue about this Aussie assault force, although rumors abounded that they were led by a supposedly "demonic" schoolboy and a bare-chested, tattooed vocalist with a voice that sounded like he had gargled on smashed glass. All soon were to discover the unique musical magic that has since enthralled two generations of rock fans—the magic of AC/DC.

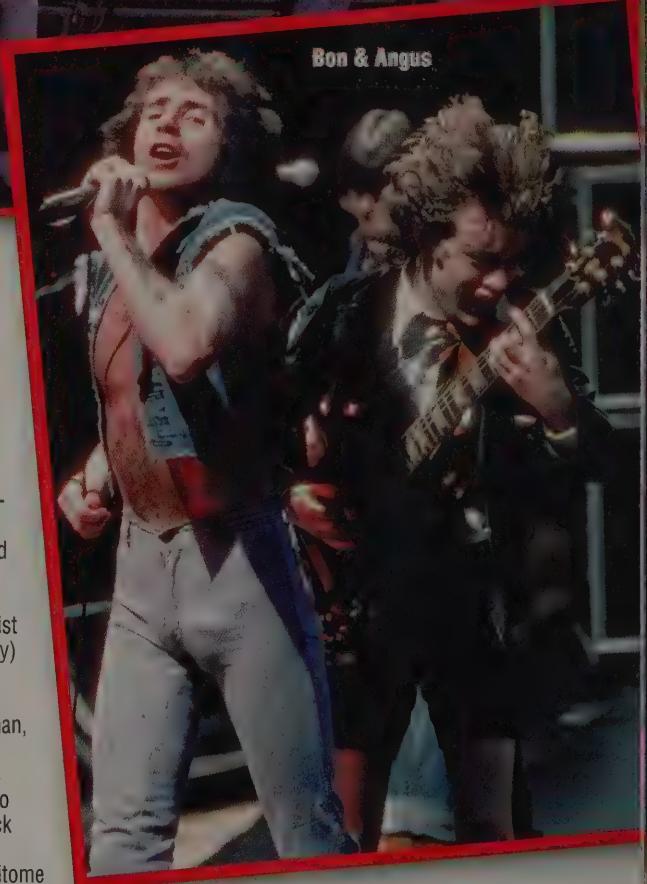
As soon as the band hit the stage at 8 PM sharp as the opening act for a since-forgotten headliner, the lucky few who had gathered for the poorly advertised event at New York's now-long-gone Palladium Theater knew they were witnessing something special. There stood Angus Young, in all his knock-kneed glory, toting a cherry red Gibson SG that at times seemed bigger than he was. The show had barely begun, but already the pint-sized axe demon was sweating like he had just gone 15 tough rounds with the lightweight champion of

PHOTO:RON POWNALL / FRANK WHITE PHOTO AGENCY



the world. The songs came in rapid-fire order—barely giving the audience time to grasp and absorb the sonic assault that was coming their way. Each tune was raw, rude and rocking, a far cry from the "corporate" hard rock style that was dominating that era's chart action. From first note to last Angus was a whirling dervish, a non-stop cyclone of frenetic activity, as he rolled on the floor, pranced about the stage, and finally, climactically, dashed to the arena's upper deck in mid-song (Angus was one of the first guitarist to go "wireless"—out of necessity) while never missing a lick.

While all this was going on, his alter ego, the craggy-faced frontman, Bon Scott, stood virtually motionless—except, of course, when he either picked up the microphone to sing or lifted a handy bottle of Jack Daniels to drink. As chaos ensued around him, Bon remained the epitome of cool, collected calm. It was as if the burly Scott was most at home on the concert stage, belting out the band's blue-collar anthems of love, lust and back door men as Angus caused a frenzy on all sides surrounding him. While Scott appeared old enough to be the father of Angus and his rhythm guitarist brother, Malcolm, there was an apparent camaraderie and an understanding between them that instantly told all who witnessed the show that this was more than just



Bon & Angus

another rock and roll band—this was a hard rockin' "family."

"Bon was the guy who really taught us everything," Angus said. "He had been around a lot more than we had, so he was the one who always kind of took charge of things. Without Bon there to guide us through, I don't know if we would have survived the first few years."

Regrettably, just as AC/DC was reaching their commercial peak in the early '80s, after albums

AC/DC sweat it out on stage.



like **High Voltage**, **Powerage** and **Highway To Hell** had begun to knock down every barrier placed in their path, Scott's life came to an abrupt and unexpected end. Apparently the hard drinking, hard living vocalist had decided to camp out in the back seat of his car after a particularly heavy night of imbibing. A cold snap came through, and before morning, Scott had passed on due to hypothermia. Almost instantly Scott was transformed by the rock media from being an occasionally maligned source of amusement into one of the patron saints of the burgeoning hard rock realm. But at the same time, Angus and the boys were left without their spiritual and physical leader. They didn't know what to do. After years of just getting on stage and letting the chips fall where they may, AC/DC were facing the first true crisis of their career. For a number of months they considered breaking up the band. But finally cooler heads prevailed.

"That was an incredibly hard time for us," Angus recalled. "When Bon died, we really didn't know what to do. We had just started having some real success due to **Highway To Hell**, and everything seemed to be going our way. Then all of a sudden Bon was gone, and so were a lot of our dreams."



"When Bon died, we really didn't know what to do."

The late Bon Scott

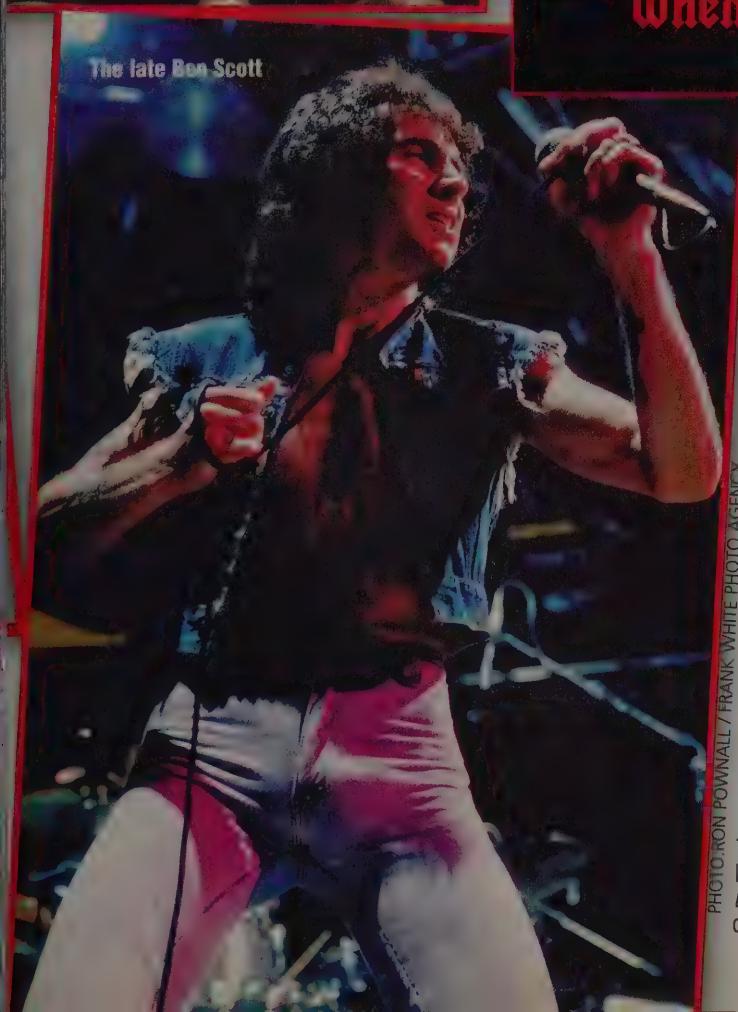


PHOTO: RON POWELL / FRANK WHITE PHOTO AGENCY

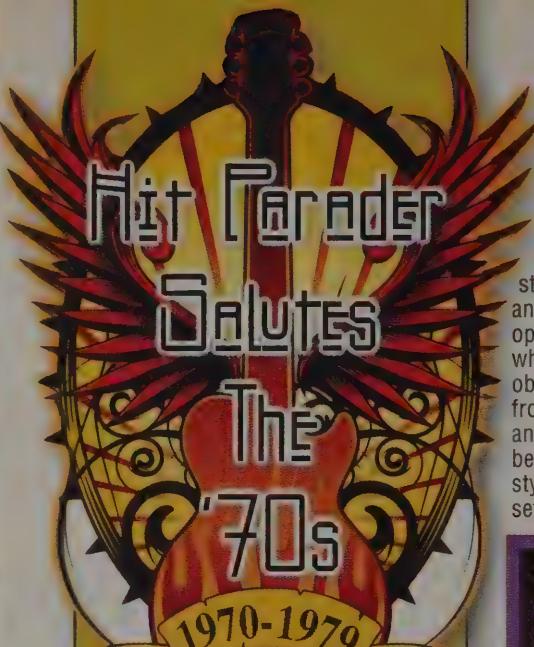
After a lengthy period of emotional recovery and introspection, the band decided to hire former Geordie vocalist Brian Johnson and head almost immediately back into the recording studio. They wanted to keep as busy as possible in order to keep the heartbreaking memories of Scott out of their minds. Almost as if to wash the tragic event out of their systems, the band chose to record their entire next album as a homage to Scott, little knowing that the disc in question, **Back In Black**, would soon emerge as one of the landmark achievements in rock and roll history. The album, spurred on by songs like **Hells Bells**, proceeded to sell over 15 million copies

world-wide, establishing AC/DC as the biggest hard rock band anywhere. While Angus still has trouble fully comprehending the band's "overnight" success, he knows that Bon would have been proud.

"What happened with **Back In Black** was simply amazing," he said. "Everything just came together. Obviously there was a lot of interest in the band because of Bon's death, and we threw every bit of emotion we were feeling into that album. All the songs had a rather somber feel to them, but there was anger too. In a strange way, we were really mad at Bon for putting us through all that."

Indeed, as AC/DC hit the road for their first headlining tour of arenas, Johnson's appearance on stage was frequently met with cries of "We Want Bon." Rather than being offended, or concerned, by the crowd's response, the heavily-accented resident of Glasgow simply replied "I want Bon, too." From there, however, things only got better, by tour's end, AC/DC had hit a musical peak that they had never achieved with the charismatic but unpredictable Scott. Angus further established himself as one of the most inventive and entertaining guitar forces in rock history, and the band's reputation quickly evolved into the unmatched masters of riff rock.

"That was the turning point for us, no question about it," Angus said. "When success came it came in a huge way. It almost consumed us. But after Bon's passing, nothing else could throw us off course."



Hit Parader Salutes

The '70s

1970-1979

International Metal Masters

THIN LIZZY

THE BOYS ARE BACK

Philip Lynott had the soul of a poet. That's not something often said about one of the most influential hard rock musicians and songwriters of his time. But when he wasn't stomping across the stage or creating epic, yet strangely radio-friendly albums with Thin Lizzy, this tall, thin, black Irishman would frequently sequester himself away in his home in the outskirts of Dublin to write books of poetry. Occasionally those efforts would surface in one of Lynott's heart-felt, street-savvy songs, but usually they either found themselves housed in one of his published poetry books, or hidden away on a secret shelf.

"Not all of my poems are for the public," Lynott told **Hit Parader** back in 1977. "Sometimes I just write them for myself or for one special person. I usually write those poems in a different way than I write my song lyrics, but occasionally one becomes the other."

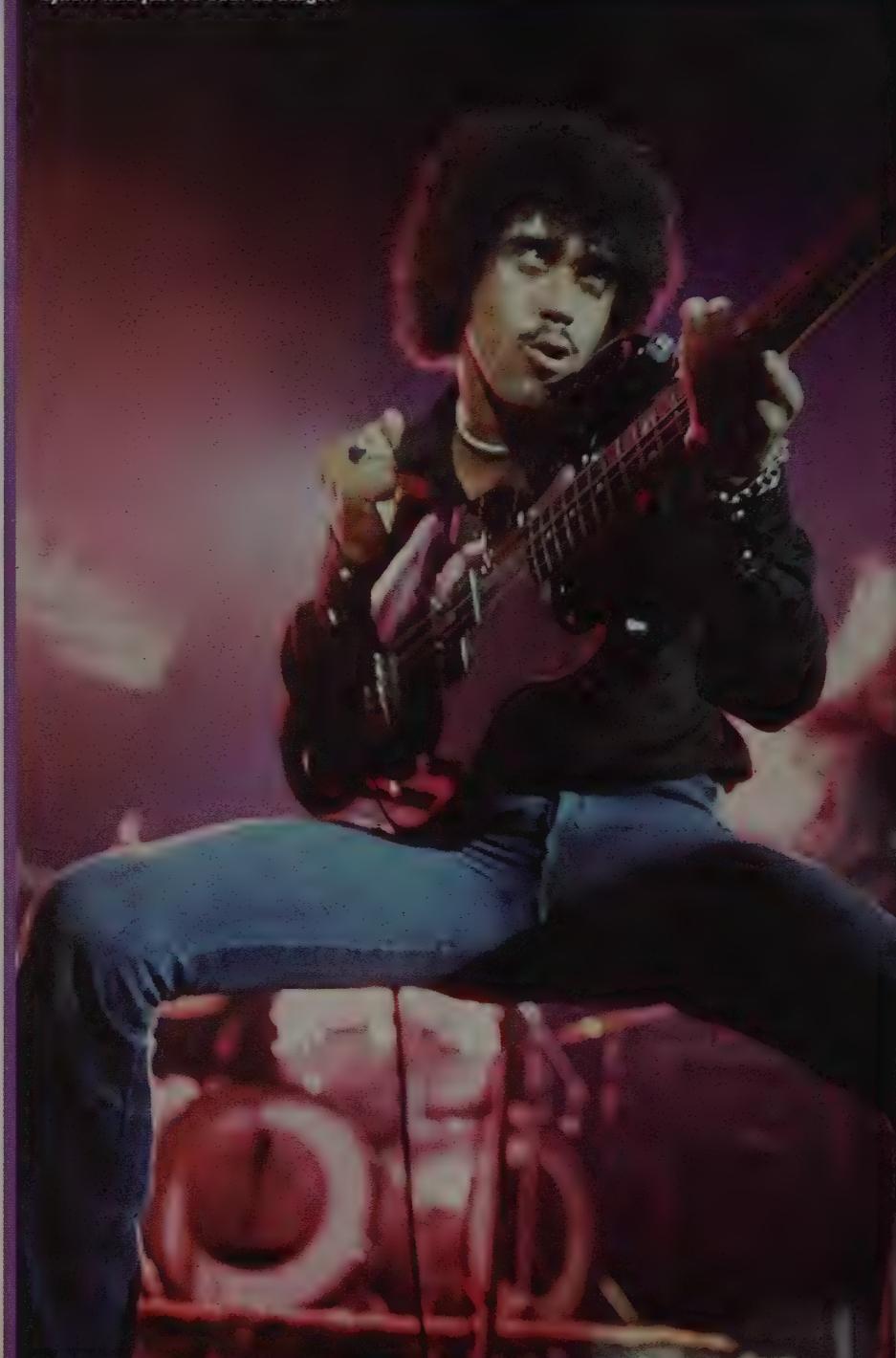
Clearly, Philip Lynott was about as atypical a rock star as one could ever hope to find. He was a dreamer in a world of pragmatists. He was a rock-

er who wasn't scared to sandwich a tune filled with acoustic tenderness between two full-throttle thrashers. He was someone who drew upon his strong Irish roots to flavor both his music and his lyrics. And he was a black man operating within what was ostensibly the white man's world of rock and roll. Quite obviously, he was someone who stood out from the gathering throng both figuratively and literally. But as the driving force behind Thin Lizzy, Lynott helped provide style and substance to a band that helped set rock and roll precedents that are still

being admired, and followed, today.

That group's dual-lead guitar format, lilting melodies and hard driving rhythms may have initially made only a minor impression upon the hard rock masses of that time—many of whom seemed better focused on the more blatant sounds brought forth by the likes of Kiss and Sabbath. But over the ensuing years that impact has expanded at an almost exponential rate, with songs such as *Dancing In the Moonlight*, *Jailbreak* and the timeless *The Boys Are Back in Town* creating one of the truly great legacies in contemporary music history. Indeed, the

"Lynott was just so cool on stage."



influence of both Lynott and Thin Lizzy on successive generations of bands—including the likes of Metallica and Def Leppard, both of whom have covered Lizzy songs on album—has proven to be one of the most enduring and endearing histories in contemporary music annals.

"Thin Lizzy was one of the bands that first opened my ears to rock music," said Def Leppard vocalist Joe Elliott. "Lynott was just so cool on stage, and his songs were magic. They had an almost hypnotic power—they were so perfectly structured and delivered. And when you throw in those beautifully synchronized double guitar leads, you had a truly unique and special band."

Throughout the '70s, Thin Lizzy's "bad" reputation as a brilliant album band and a killer on-stage attraction continued to grow. From the moment their first hit *Whiskey In The Jar*—later covered by Metallica—broke in 1973 it became clear that this was a band with something very different to say, and a very different way of saying it.

else," said an industry insider. "There were tastes of so many things, bits and pieces of both American and European sensibilities. But what always shined through was a hodge-podge that was all directly from Lynott's imagination."

Unfortunately, despite all of his creative brilliance, there was also a darker side to Lynott's mystique—one that eventually served to take his life in 1986. Even as far back as the band's break-out American tour in 1975, when they were the special guests of Rainbow (basically because that group's leader, Ritchie Blackmore, was an avowed fan of Lizzy's), Lynott was forced to cancel many dates for what was then diagnosed as "hepatitis". But behind the scenes it was well known at he had developed a nasty drug habit, one that would follow him throughout his adult life and eventually lead to his untimely demise.

But we're not here to mourn Lynott's passing; rather we're here to celebrate the music he created with the one and only Thin Lizzy. While the band's lineup would change over the years (eventually presenting such renowned guitarists as Gary Moore—with whom Lynott had briefly been in an English

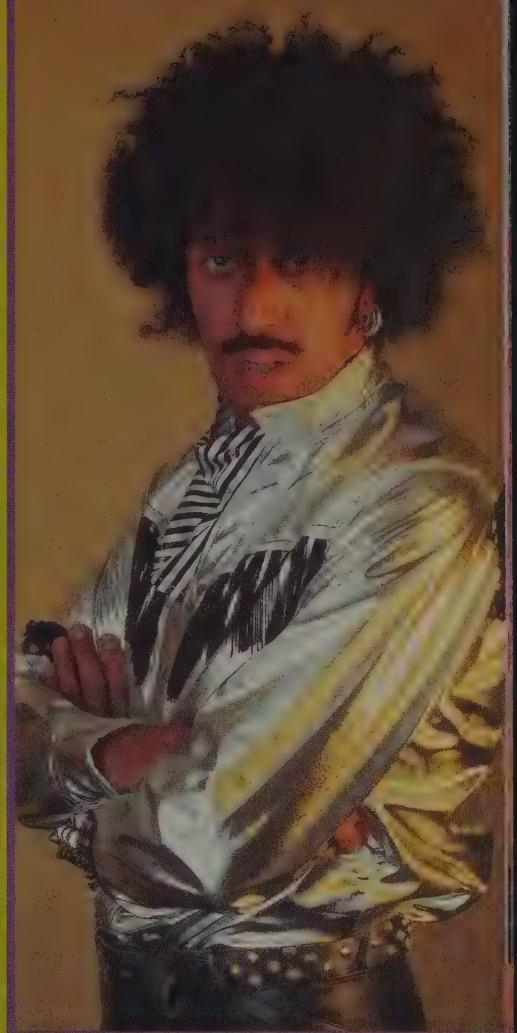
"ONE OF THE GREATEST THINGS ABOUT THIN LIZZY WAS THAT THEY SEEMED TO EMERGE WITHOUT A DIRECT INFLUENCE FROM ANYONE ELSE."

Working most notably with guitarists Scott Gorham and Brian Robertson, along with drummer Brian Downey, bassist/vocalist Lynott helped forge some of that decade's most superlative discs, including *Nightlife*, *Fighting*, *Jailbreak* and *Bad Reputation*, each of which melded conventional hard rock dynamics with snippets of everything from Irish folk music to American country-western. Throw in for good measure, the tough-nosed street bravado that Lynott brought with him from his upbringing in Dublin, and what you emerged with was a band fully capable of playing just about anything... and making it uniquely their own in the process.

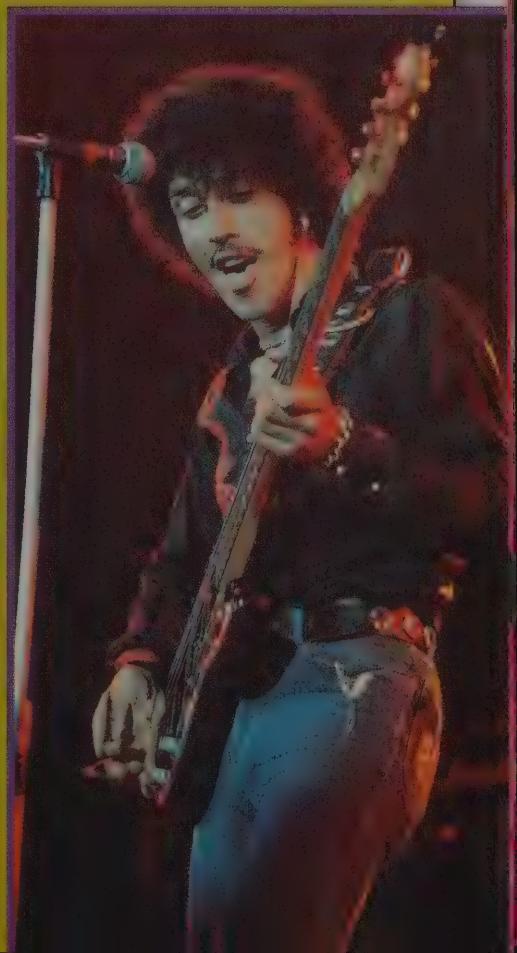
"One of the greatest things about Thin Lizzy was that they seemed to emerge without a direct influence from anyone

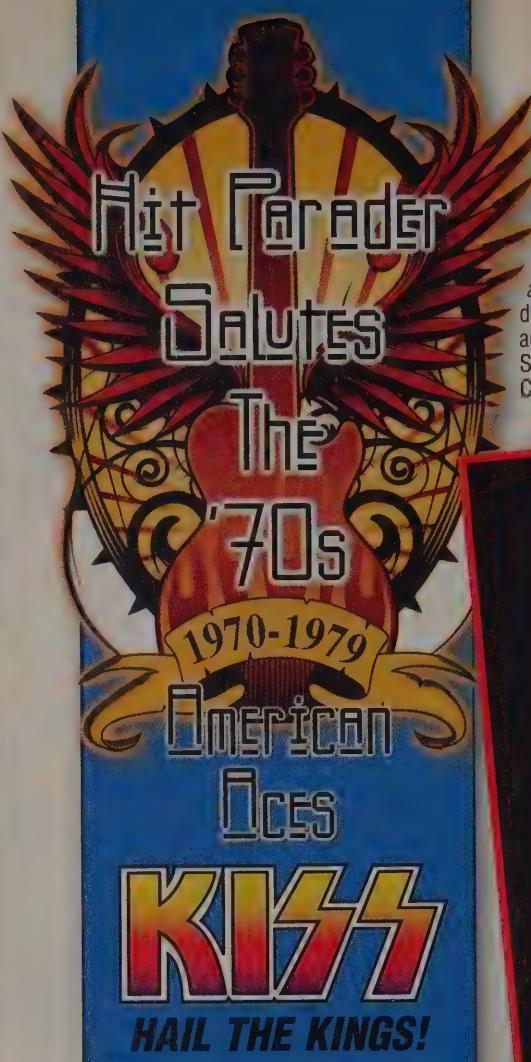
band called Skid Row in the late '60s—(John Sykes and Snowey White) it was the band's core quartet of Lynott, Downey, Robertson and Gorham who will always be associated with the group's Golden Age. Somewhat amazingly—and even alarmingly—since 1996 there has been a Lizzy revival, with Sykes serving as the band's frontman in the late Lynott's stead. While Gorham has been part of these various "reunions" to at least provide a semblance of "respectability", the fact is that a Thin Lizzy without Philip Lynott is kind of like the Beatles without John Lennon and Paul McCartney.

"I don't think either John or Scott is trying to do any disservice to Lizzy's memory," said our industry source. "I think they would be among the first to admit the fact that without Lynott, Thin Lizzy just isn't the same band. But they're doing something noble—they're trying to celebrate both the music and the man that created it, while keeping it alive for a new generation. It is, after all, quite a good ambition."



Philip Lynott





There's no question that the '70s were Kiss' Golden Age. Back then, long before they turned into heavy metal's equivalent of the Beach Boys, endlessly churning out their hits from 25 years earlier to an increasingly more middle-aged fan-base, everything about this face-painted, high-stepping, blood-spouting New York-based unit seemed fresh, new and exciting. Everywhere they went back then they generated near-riots from their fast-growing following, who saw within these costumed crusaders, hard rock's next—and most entertaining—evolutionary step.

The fact is that it has now been well over than three decades since Kiss first exploded like a neutron bomb on the rock and roll scene: 30-plus years filled with incredible music, larger-than-life personalities and the most exciting stage show ever seen by the eyes of mortal man. To say the least, Kiss has come a long way during that time. It has been a period filled with many incredible victories, a few stunning setbacks, battles against drugs and alcohol and even the tragic-yet-heroic death of a band member along the way. It is a tale worthy of a Hollywood script (though most would never believe it.) It is a tale worthy of filling a trove of books. It *certainly* is a tale worth documenting in comic books (oh, sorry, that's already been done.) Quite simply, it is the tale of Kiss—perhaps

the ultimate parable of rock and roll fame and fortune.

From the moment of their inception in 1973, Kiss were designed to be everything any kid who ever picked up an electric guitar dreamed of being. They were loud, they were arrogant, and they were bigger than life. Paul Stanley, Gene Simmons, Ace Frehley and Peter Criss were comic book

"Demon" Gene or Peter the "Cat". Kiss was both omnipresent and omnipotent, the band that was destined to single-handedly revolutionize both the commercial and theatrical ethic of the hard rock empire... or die trying! Along the way they also helped establish the notion that America could produce hard rock bands capable of

Gene Simmons



heroes come-to-life, four costumed crusaders who just-so-happened to be the biggest band on earth. At the height of their mid-'70s commercial powers, when such albums as *Destroyer*, *Love Gun* and *Kiss Alive* ranked as must-have staples of any high school kid's record collection, Kiss were more than "mere" musical taste makers. They were a multi-national conglomerate that spread their influence over a wide swath of rock-related terrain which included television shows, movies, merchandise and record labels.

It was virtually impossible to walk by a newsstand or turn on the radio in 1976 without confronting "Star Child" Paul, "Space" Ace,

standing up to their British brethren such as Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath—at least in terms of fame if not musical dexterity. While some cynics would try to quickly dismiss the group as little more than a quartet of no-talent charlatans masquerading as rock stars, their never-ending string of hits, and their ability to create truly unforgettable in-concert experiences, made Kiss virtually impervious to the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.

Seeing Kiss on stage in their costumed prime was a pure eye-popping, jaw-hanging, ear-blasting experience that nothing this side of a nuclear explosion could match. From the moment the lights went up, catching the four musical "brothers" standing together at the top

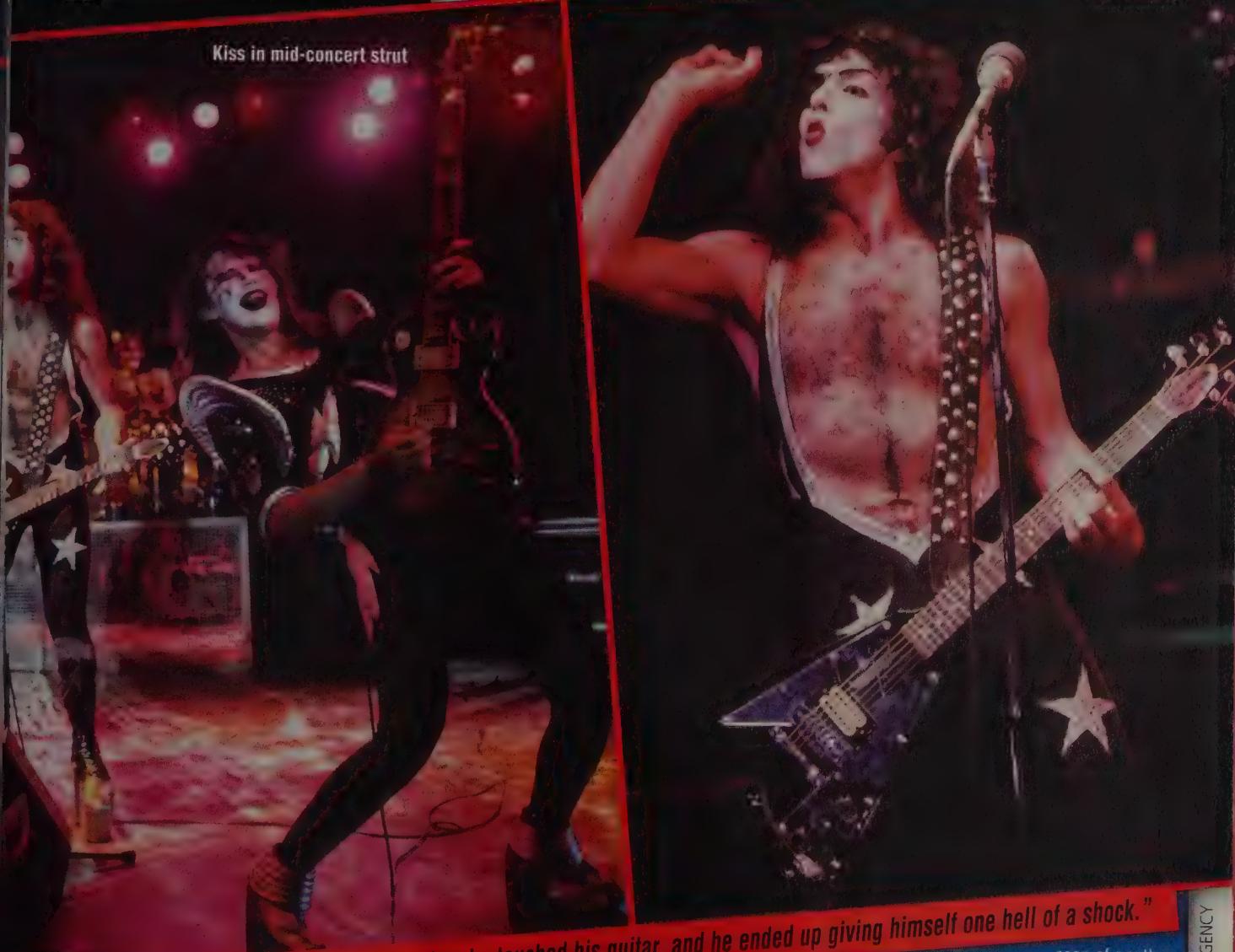
of their stage's giant ramp-way, the crowd knew they were in for a non-stop two hour rock and roll thrill-ride, the likes of which *nobody* had ever seen before. With Gene performing his nightly "staples" of breathing fire and

despite all of that, it didn't always go exactly how we had planned. I remember once when we all came down the steps at the start of the show, and I looked

denied the long annals of rock history. Inspired by the moderate suc-

Paul Stanley

Kiss in mid-concert strut



"*Ace had been standing in some water when he touched his guitar, and he ended up giving himself one hell of a shock.*"

spitting blood, and Paul prowling the footlights like a caged lion, a Kiss concert was a bastardized cross between a circus side show and a Broadway-musical-from-hell. Through it all, however, the Kiss Army ate it up. They stood and cheered from first note to last, singing along with every tune and flailing their arms in wild abandon as they played air guitar in honor of each of Ace's searing six string solos.

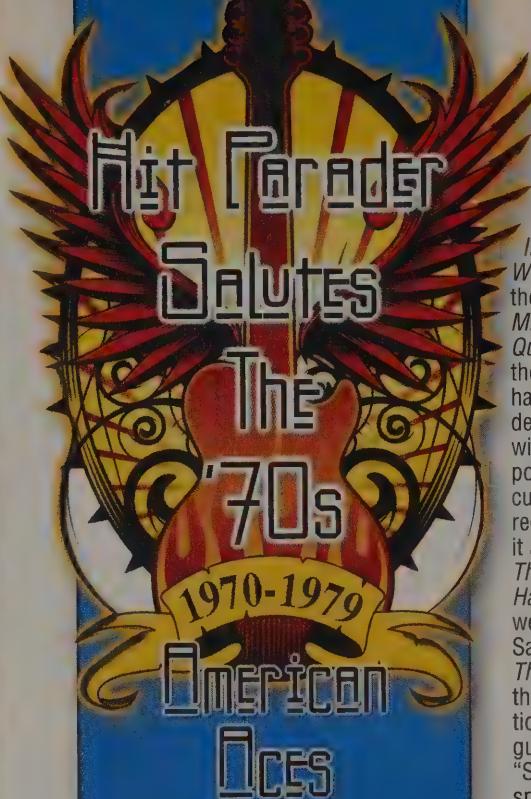
"We planned everything for maximum impact," Stanley said. "I don't think there's ever been a rock and roll band that's spent more time in the planning of their stage show. We worked on the stage itself with the best engineers in the business, and the lighting effects were years ahead of their time. But,

around and Ace was nowhere to be seen. Then I looked up to the top of the platform we had just come down and all I could see were his huge, silver platform boots sticking into the air. Evidently he had been standing in some water when he touched his guitar, and he ended up giving himself one hell of a shock."

The shock that Frehley gave himself on stage that night was nothing in comparison to the shock the entire rock world felt as Kiss began dominating the music scene as no band had done before. From their humble beginnings in New York City in 1973 when four gentlemen named Stanley Eisen (Paul) Chiam Klein (Gene), Paul Frehley (Ace) and Peter Crisscuola (Peter) first married their fortunes together, theirs was a unique rocket ride straight to the top—a journey unprece-

cess of another early '70s Big Apple band, the New York Dolls. Kiss jumped into the fray with a well-planned approach that left little to chance. They knew the critics would hate them. They knew that mainstream rock society would shun them like the plague. But they also knew that a new generation of kids had come along who were searching for rock and roll heroes to identify with—and Kiss were determined to be those heroes.

"We all had come from rather conservative backgrounds," Simmons explained. "I was teaching school at about the same time that Kiss was forming. The band was basically four guys who shared a musical vision and were determined to do just about anything to make that vision a reality. We knew that our regular jobs meant long hours and little pay. We knew rock and roll meant money, women and travel. It wasn't a tough choice to make."



MOUNTAIN LIVIN' LARGE

England had Cream... America had Mountain. The links between the two groups were apparent; after all, both bands were power trios featuring guitarists of immense talent and charisma—and, lest we forget, Mountain founder/bassist Felix Pappalardi had served as the producer on some of Cream's best work. But their differences were just as obvious. While Cream featured Eric Clapton—a lean, handsome, cultural icon whose brilliant solos frequently inspired his followers to inscribe "Clapton is God" on London walls, Mountain featured Leslie West—a portly, Jewish kid from Queens, whose equally inspired noodlings occasionally drove his followers to write "West is Fat" on the walls of his suburban New York hood.

"We weren't the ones that made those comparisons with Cream," said long-time Mountain drummer Corky Laing. "The rock press first jumped on it, and ran with it. But we weren't about to complain. After all, when you're compared to a great band featuring incredible musicians, there's really nothing to say. But it was left up to us to make sure that we made our own mark as Mountain—and I'm pretty sure that we did."

Yup, they made a mark alright, one that some 35 years later still rings true with memorable songs such as *Nantucket Sleighride*, *Theme From An*

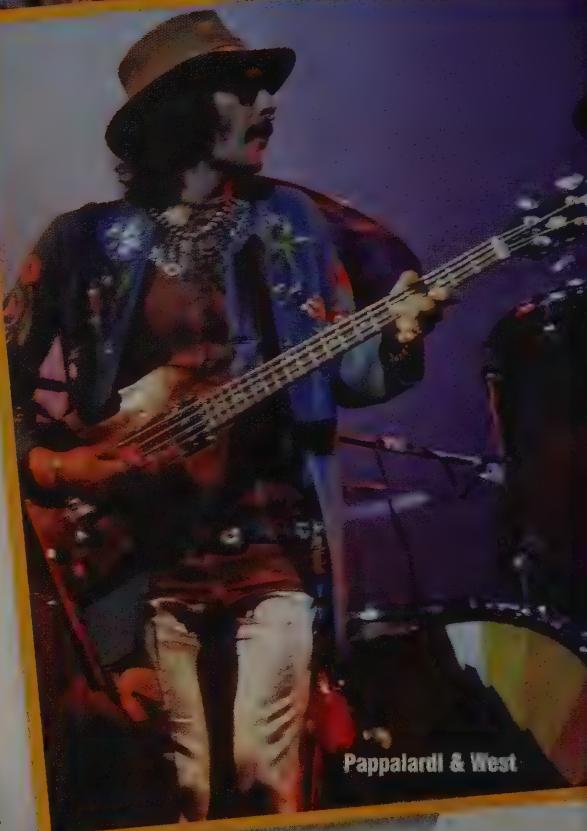
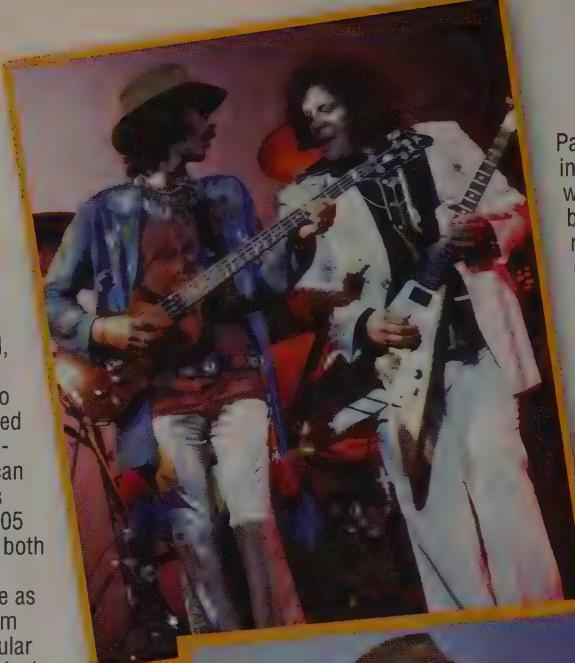
Imaginary Western, and the immortal *Mississippi Queen*. Indeed, the latter tune has become so deeply ingrained within contemporary American culture that as recently as 2005 it appeared in both *The Dukes of Hazard* remake as well as in Adam Sandler's popular *The Longest Yard*—there as the musical inspiration for the racist prison guard played by wrestler "Stone Cold" Steve Austin to sneer the line, "now that's the way a white man plays guitar!"

But, despite their '70s notoriety and degree of lasting fame, there was clearly and unfortunately another side to the Mountain saga. While they quickly became one of the most popular rock bands of their era, with discs like *Climbing and Nantucket Sleighride* reaching the top of the sales charts, there was always a dark aura surrounding the band's persona that seemed to hold them back from attaining their greatest destiny. Rumors of unsavory off-stage predilections often followed the group around, while there was often a tempestuous relationship between Pappalardi and his wife/creative partner, Gail Collins, eventually leading to her shooting and killing the talented bassist/producer in 1983.

"That's still so shocking to think about," Laing said. "It's hard to fathom. Felix was so talented on so many levels, especially as a musician and producer. We always shared a great deal of respect. Obviously, without him there never would have been a Mountain."

For all their supposed "packaging" as an instant American supergroup, Mountain's birth was an affair of decided happenstance. Back in 1968, while Pappalardi was cutting his production teeth with Cream, West (then Weinstein) was earning his stripes as leader of a New York based blues/rock band called the Vagrants. When that group realized their career path was headed nowhere fast, West decided to record a solo disc—and hired on Pappalardi (who was immediately struck by West's incredible guitar talents) as producer. The pair immediately hit it off, with

Pappalardi supplying the solo album with both his booming bass runs and spiritual guidance. Within weeks the duo had decided to form a band, taking the title of West's solo disc, *Mountain*, as their group moniker. They started writing material and appearing at New York



Pappalardi & West

area clubs... all leading up to their fourth live show ever being at 1969's historic Woodstock Festival, where the band performed in front of more than 250,000 fans.

"David Crosby uttered a famous line about how scared he was at Woodstock," West stated. "I was so nervous that I don't know if I could have even spoken that much! We had been a band for such a short time, it's amazing that it all came off as well as it did."

Since they had no group album out at the time of their Woodstock set, few in the audience—more attuned to the soft-rock style created by the likes of CSN&Y and Joe Cocker—could relate to Mountain's decidedly heavy rock sound. But that high-profile gig served as the perfect foundation for the

release of the band's first album, **Climbing**, in 1970. With *Mississippi Queen* taking full advantage of the then-burgeoning FM radio format, the album shot to the Top 20 of the sales charts, quickly establishing Mountain among the world's preeminent hard rock units. Their hectic touring schedule took them around the globe, barely leaving time for the recording of **Nantucket Sleighride** in 1971. But that disc's somewhat more languid approach, as well as the radio success of the title track, helped further boost the band's efforts.

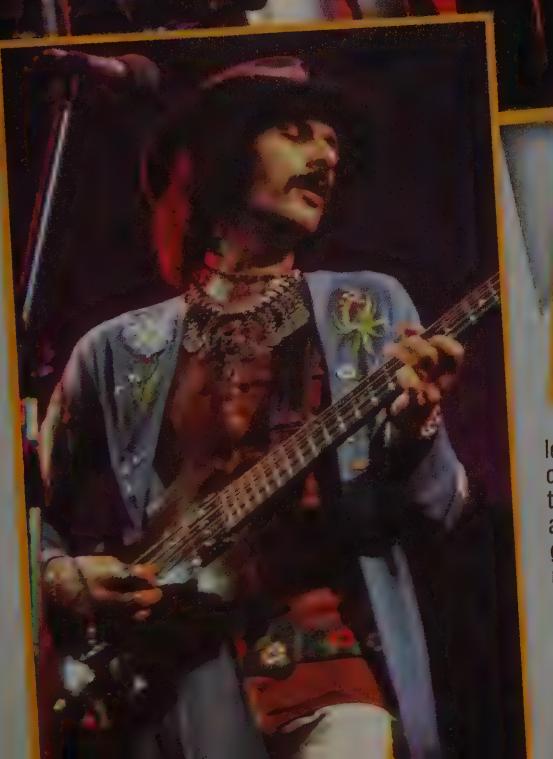
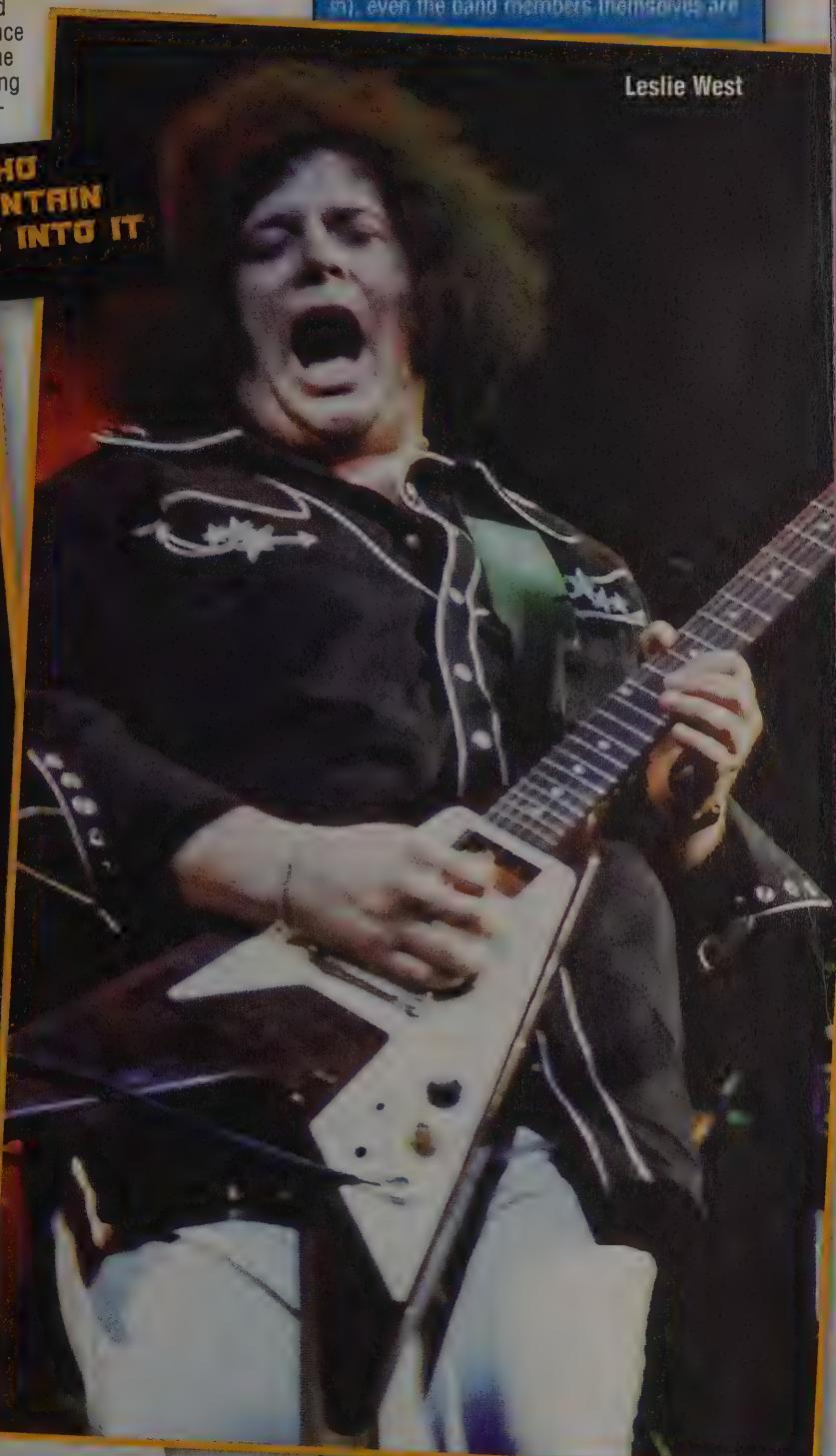
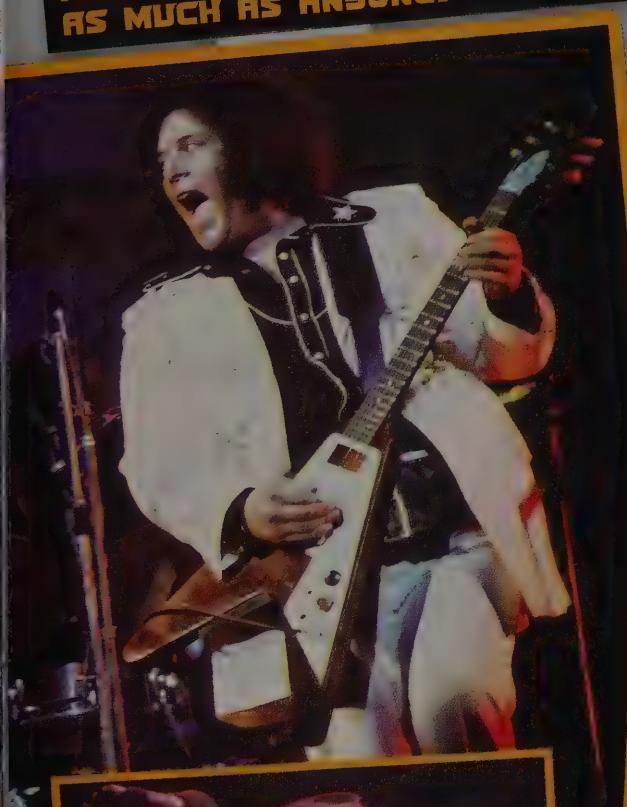
to attain stellar recognition.

Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons (many stemming from the unpredictable nature of their off-stage lifestyles), that disc was to prove to be the apex of Mountain's recording career. A 1972 disc, **Flowers of Evil**, provided titular reference to some of the band's growing internal prob-

lems, and proved to be a commercial disappointment. The band was to break up soon after, with West and Laing somewhat ironically going off to form a band with none other than Cream bassist Jack Bruce. That group, cleverly named West, Bruce & Laing went on to record three albums before

they too fell apart with West (and later Laing) soon again teaming with Pappalardi as Mountain. Despite initial fan interest, it was never quite the same, and while Mountain continues to tour the world to this very day (with bassist Richie Scarlet sitting in), even the band members themselves are

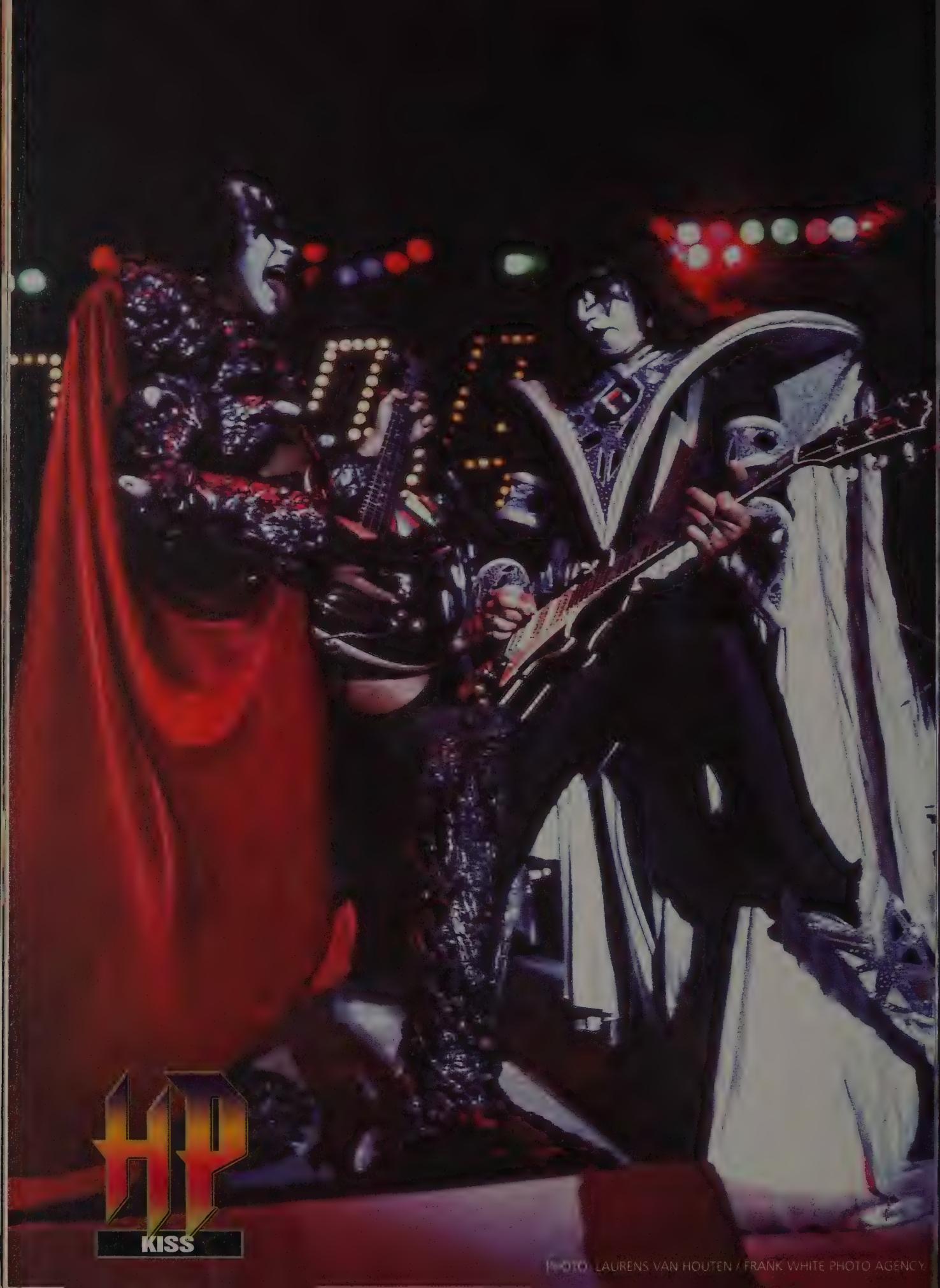
"THERE ARE KIDS OUT THERE WHO WEREN'T EVEN BORN WHEN MOUNTAIN WAS AT ITS PEAK, BUT THEY'RE INTO IT AS MUCH AS ANYONE."



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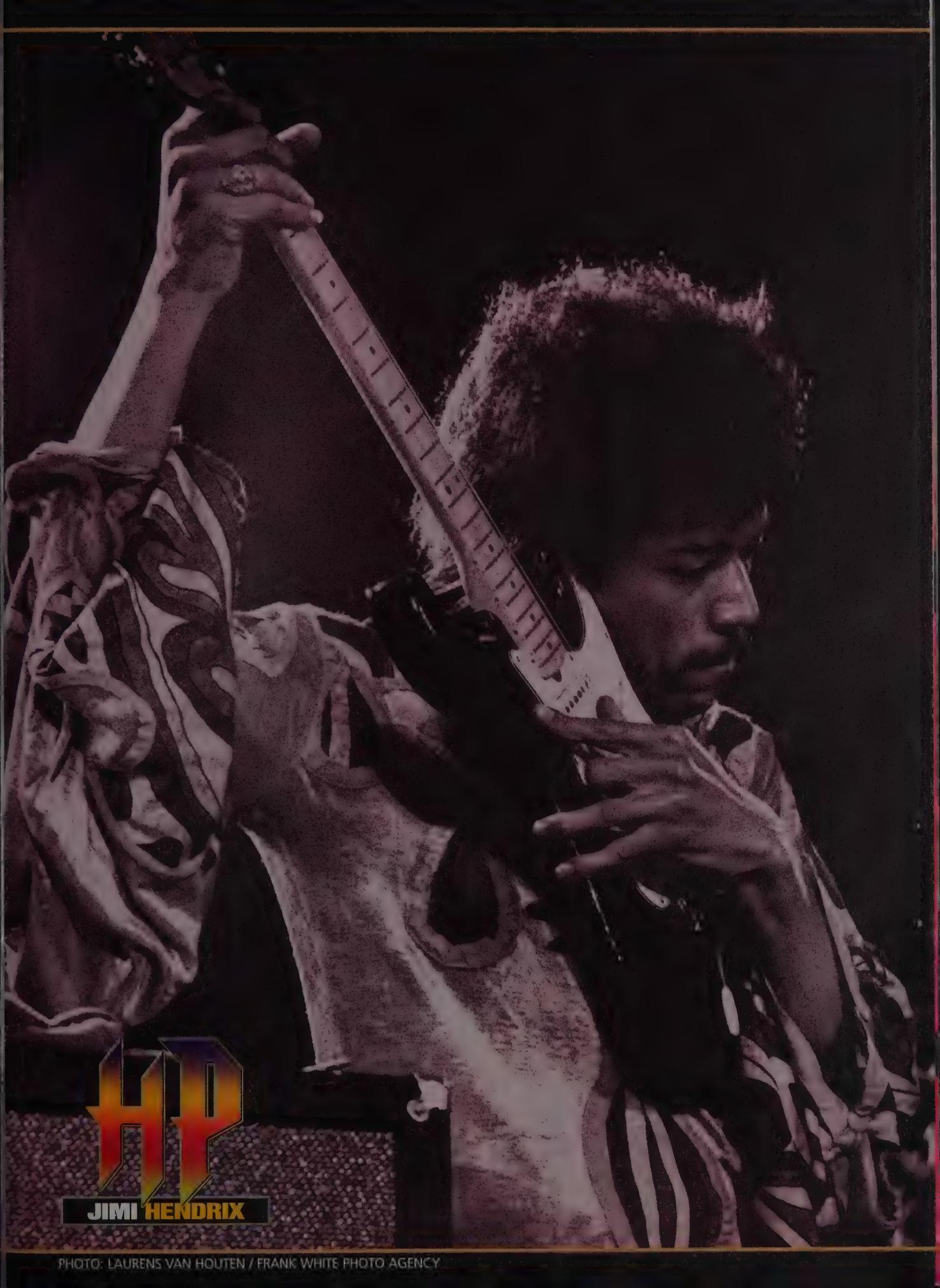
quick to acknowledge that their brief, but shining moment in the rock and roll sun is now little more than a distant—but still vibrant—memory.

"It's amazing how the fans still react to this music," Laing said. "There are kids out there who weren't even born when Mountain was at its peak, but they're into it as much as anyone. That's a very satisfying feeling."



HP
KISS

PHOTO LAURENS VAN HOUTEN / FRANK WHITE PHOTO AGENCY



JIMI HENDRIX

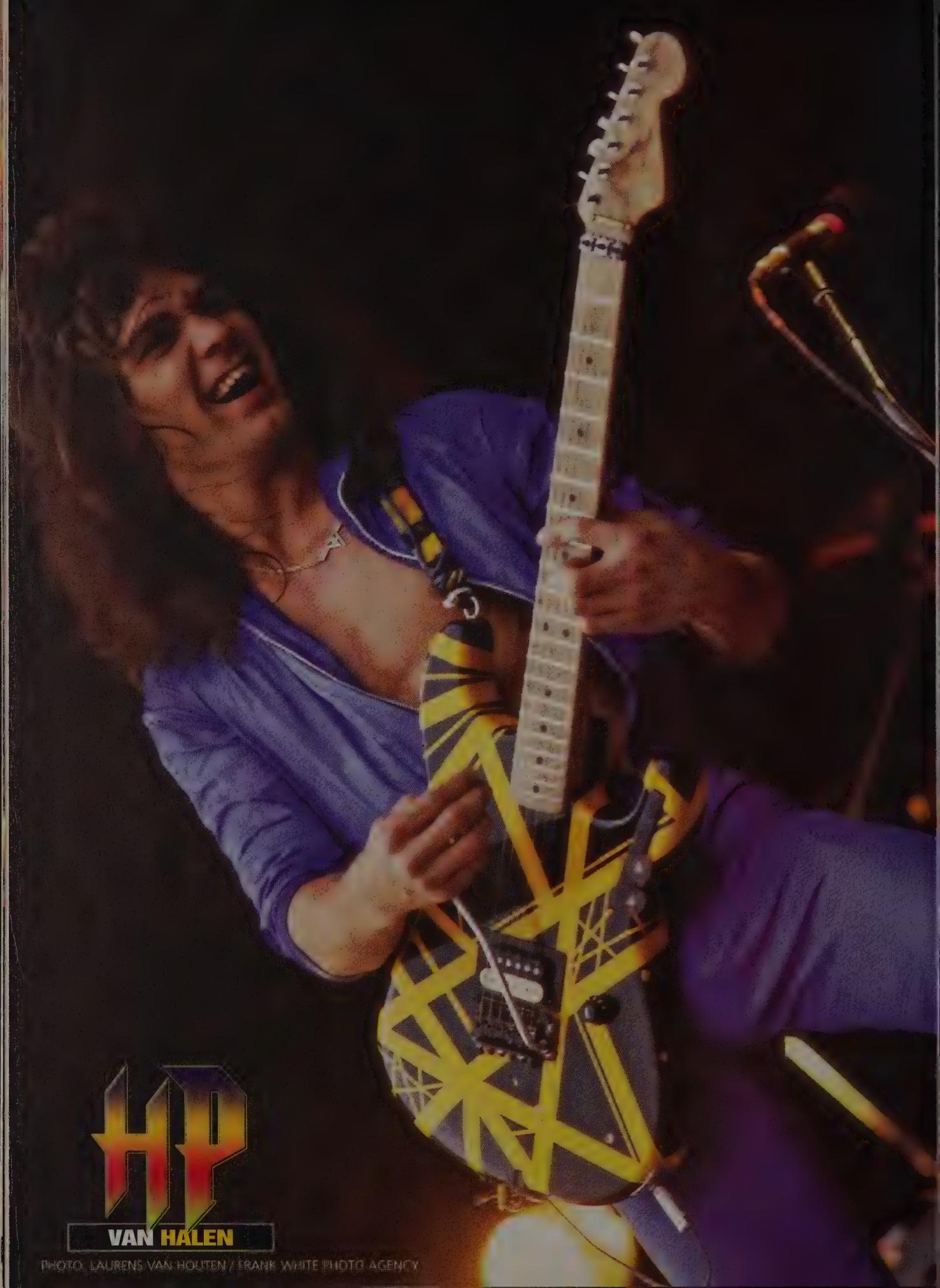
JIMI HENDRIX

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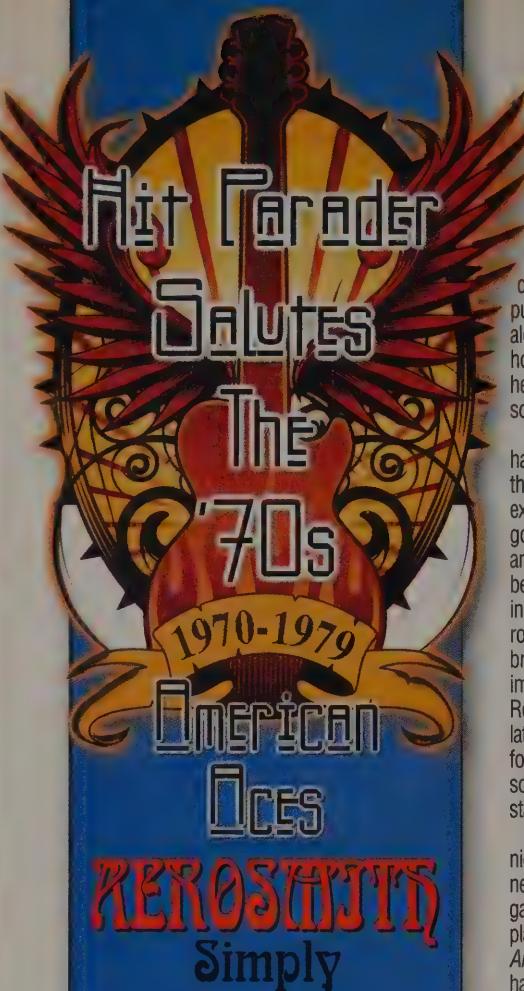
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FALLEN HEROES AD



These days, despite their on-going road presence, you might get the impression that Aerosmith are little more than a "greatest hits" factory—a band that releases either a live or studio compilation of their past accomplishments on an annual basis. But while those in charge of their glorious past may well be milking the proverbial Aero-cow dry, let's never forget that this band which came to life with the release of their legendary single *Dream On* way back in 1973, today remains as viable and buyable as any band currently operating in the hard rock market place.

Considering all that these legendary Boston bad Boys have accomplished during their lengthy stint atop the rock world—and considering all that they had to survive in order to get there—vocalist Steven Tyler has a hard time accepting the fact that Aerosmith is now celebrating their 34th Anniversary. To the eternally young frontman, at times it seems as if the band he formed so long ago with guitarist Joe Perry, bassist Tom Hamilton, guitarist Brad Whitford and drummer Joey Kramer is still the new-kid-on-the-block, a band still struggling to truly establish their reputation as America's premier blues-rock contingent. But to the generations of fans that have grown up under Aerosmith's pervasive influence, this seminal blues-based unit remain a true rock and roll institution—though Tyler would certainly joke that he is too young to be "institutionalized."

"I do still feel young, and I still feel we have something to prove," the large-lipped frontman stated. "I look around and still see musicians

like Eric Clapton as well bands like the Stones and Who—all of whom were my influences when I was growing up—being active and productive. In comparison to them, we're just a bunch of pups. Yeah, it's great when a lot of young bands come along and tell us how much we've meant to them and how much they admire us. But we're not necessarily here to be admired and adored—we're here to play some great rock and roll."

To many American rock and roll fans Aerosmith have always represented something special, a band that in many ways was bigger than life, a group that exemplified the freewheeling, fun-loving, anything-goes attitude that has always been at the heart of rock and roll's appeal. Quite simply, Aerosmith has always been the band we could truly call our own. Emerging in the early '70s, at a time when American rock and roll bands still played second fiddle to their British brethren, the band's raucous, roadhouse sound was immediately compared to that of everyone from the Rolling Stones, to Led Zeppelin to the Yardbirds (the latter of whom, as legend has it, Tyler briefly worked for as a "roadie" during his youth). But there was something about Aerosmith that made them instantly stand out from the crowd of neo-Brit poseurs.

Sure Tyler had Mick's lips and Perry had conveniently borrowed Keith's guitar swagger, but Aerosmith never needed to rely on anyone or anything in order to garner a lion's share of attention. After all, they were playing *American* music—the blues—in a distinctly *American* way. What the Stones and Zeppelin may have had to pick up second-hand, Aerosmith seemed to have had injected directly into their veins. From the moment their self-titled debut disc was released in 1973, there was no mistaking it—Aerosmith were going to give American rock and roll the credibility it had long craved.

"We started out as a band that loved playing the blues and loved playing rock and roll, and when you think about it, that's still pretty much what we are today," Perry said. "We never expected this to last for the long-run. I don't think any of us ever gave it much thought. We were just all interested in making it to the next day. I remember in the early days how we all lived in this tiny apartment in Boston. It was cold, there was never any food, but every Saturday night we'd have a big party. It was a blast."

The "party" for Aerosmith soon became a virtually non-stop event. The success of their debut disc was followed in short order by 1974's *Get Your Wings*, 1975's *Toys In The Attic* and 1976's *Rocks*. Each disc sold progressively more than its predecessor, with *Toys* becoming the group's first platinum seller, and *Rocks* their first venture into double-platinum. With radio picking up on each of the band's single releases—with such tunes as *Sweet Emotion* and *Walk This Way* becoming both AM and FM staples—and the group's concert performances drawing rave reviews from coast to coast, Aerosmith soon found themselves in the enviable position of not only being one of America's biggest rock and roll attractions, but one of the biggest rock attractions on Earth! It was all heady stuff for these five young rockers, and some of the fame—and accompanying fortune—began to go directly to the band's collective head.

"Hey, we were all a bunch of young single guys on the road," Tyler said. "What do you think was going on. Women were everywhere, drugs were everywhere, alcohol was everywhere—we tried everything, and we tried a lot of it. There's no question that it started hav-

We're not necessarily here to be admired and adored—we're here to play some great rock and roll."

ing a real bad effect on us. There started to be some real problems within the band. Looking back on it, it was really sad. Here we were at what should have been the happiest times of our lives, and we were blowing it—both figuratively and literally."

The stories of both Aerosmith's excesses, and their inner turmoil—filled the rock wires. Even on stage where Tyler's hip-shaking gyrations and scarf-dripping microphone stand had fast become trademarks, there was a big drop-off in both band energy and cohesion. Despite the group's obvious internal problems they struggled ahead, releasing the highly successful *Draw The Line* in 1977 and *Live Bootleg* in 1978. But by the time the group gathered together to begin work on *Night In The Ruts* in 1979, the writing was apparently already on the wall. Perry, who had long been like a brother to Tyler, openly began resenting both the frontman's dominance over the group, and his growing unpredictable demeanor. Soon after the disc's release, Perry quit the band to begin his own Joe Perry Project with whom he'd record three moderately successful albums. As if Perry's defection wasn't enough of a distraction, there were soon to be more problems in store for Aerosmith—in 1981 Whitford also left the group to team up with former Ted Nugent guitarist Derek St. Holmes who together recorded one album under the clever moniker of Whitford/St. Holmes. As Tyler



recalls, it looked like Aerosmith was truly between a rock and a hard place.

"You know, what's really unfortunate is that I was so out of it most of the time that when Joe left the true significance of what had happened was kind of lost on me," he said. "I was more concerned about taking care of my own needs than anything else. I don't think I had a clue as to how much trouble I was in and how much trouble the band was in. Thankfully, we both made it through."

It would still be a long, hard road for Tyler, Kramer and Hamilton before Aerosmith would again enjoy smooth sailing. The band recruited guitarists Jimmy Crespo and Rick Dufay to replace Perry and Whitford, and began work on their next disc, **Rock In A Hard Place**—an album that also happened to represent the end of their original contract with Columbia Records. The record wasn't bad, but it barely managed to go gold, despite the best efforts of the label and the band's management to promote it to the max. Their 1983 world tour was met with lukewarm response from both fans and the media, and Tyler's growing health problems were evident to all in attendance. Many began to predict that Aerosmith wouldn't make it through the year...and to secretly whisper that a similar fate might befall Tyler. But just as things began to plummet towards total oblivion, a ray of light shone

through. On Valentine's Day, 1984, Perry and Whitford showed up unexpectedly at an Aerosmith concert in Boston. Within weeks it was announced that the band's original lineup would be reuniting for a "Back In The Saddle Tour"—and more importantly, both Tyler and Perry had agreed to try and kick their dependencies before returning to the road.

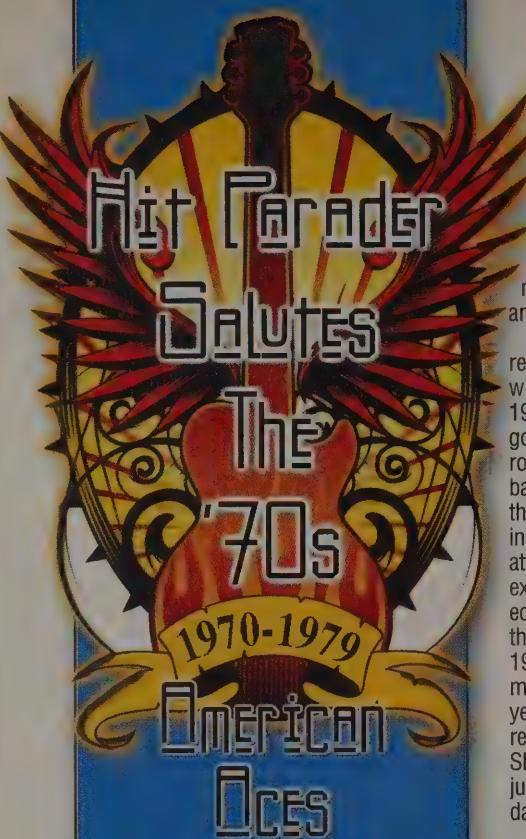
"We had to do it," Tyler said. "If we didn't we really didn't know what was going to happen. I just realized I was sick and tired of waking up on the bathroom floor of some hotel and not knowing where I was. It was killing me. But I'm strong. I knew once I put my mind to it, I could get myself together, and I did."

It proved to be a long, difficult trip through rehab, a trip filled with a never-ending series of temptations, distractions and diversions, but the self-proclaimed "Toxic Twins" finally made it through in flying colors. As if to honor their efforts, almost the day they proclaimed themselves to be free of offending chemicals, the reunited Aerosmith was offered a big-buck deal with high-flying Geffen Records. By early 1985 the hale-and-hearty unit was back in the studio working on **Done With Mirrors**, the disc that unbeknownst to Tyler, Perry and the boys, was to serve as the primary tool in reestablishing both Aerosmith's tarnished reputation and their stellar credentials. The eye-opening success of **Done With Mirrors** (which was followed by a sold-

out world tour) was quickly followed by a string of platinum successes for the band—1987's **Permanent Vacation** (featuring the hit *Dude Looks Like A Lady*), and 1989's **Pump**. Each album was followed up with an ever-larger touring itinerary, during which the "dry to the bone" Toxic Twins celebrated each victory with diet sodas and bottles of "fake beer."

Somewhere along the way (even Tyler is not sure exactly when it happened), Aerosmith found themselves transformed from an oft-troubled, struggling "wanna-be" band into the patron saints of the entire American rock and roll scene. Young groups like **Guns N' Roses** and **Mötley Crüe** openly expressed their admiration for the group and leading forces both in the print media and MTV began treating the unit as if they indeed were one of the most powerful, influential and successful bands around. It all proved to be heady stuff for Tyler and company, but they ate it all up as if it were manna from heaven. Today, 35 years after their historic start, with a new studio album on the way, there's no question that Aerosmith remain America's favorite, and best, rock and roll band.

"For a long while I thought we were just survivors," Tyler said. "But then I began to realize that it was a lot more than that, that people were really digging our music, and realizing what we had done. It really opened my eyes."



GRAND FUNK RAILROAD AN AMERICAN BAND

Few bands in hard rock history have ever had the distinction of being more frequently dismissed, more critically derided and more artistically denounced than Grand Funk Railroad. But the fact of the matter is that despite the cumbersome, overwrought and occasionally plodding sound this Michigan-based unit utilized to execute their heavy-handed rock anthems during their early '70s prime, a scant few groups in musical memory managed to capitalize upon their time in the spotlight with more aplomb than vocalist/guitarist Mark Farner, drummer Don Brewer and bassist Mel Schacher. No question about it, while they may never have been critical faves or media darlings, with a string of sold-out arenas tours to their credit and more than 25 million albums sold during their heyday (a time when they released no less than an astounding eight discs during a four-year period stretching from 1969-1973), this seminal power trio managed to deftly defy the odds, while continually proving that they were the quintessential American Band.

"I've always believed that we've gotten a bad rap," Brewer said. "If you go back and listen to those early albums there was a lot of diversity there. Yeah, the music was heavy—

but that's the way it was supposed to be. But mixed in with all the heavy stuff were some very interesting things. I don't know if the critics ever bothered to really listen, but we knew that the fans did, and that was what truly mattered."

Not only did those fans listen, but they responded in kind. Right from the start, when their debut disc, *On Time*, emerged in 1969 it was clear that Grand Funk Railroad was going to be a very different kind of rock and roll band. Based loosely on the three-man band concept pioneered by the likes of Cream, this unit never shied away from putting their instrumental prowess at the forefront of their attack—though, in all honesty, they rarely exhibited the degree of virtuosity that warranted such attention. Yet as soon as their breakthrough single, *Closer to Home*, emerged in 1970, the GFR phenomenon began to build momentum like a run-away locomotive. By year's end, they were breaking the Beatles' record for selling out New York's venerable Shea Stadium, moving over 50,000 tickets in just 71 hours... a record that still stands to this day!

"There was something about Grand Funk Railroad that just touched a responsive nerve within American rock fans," said a noted New York-based industry personality. "It was a time when Zeppelin was first emerging, and the whole hard rock sound was developing. Kids heard the brilliance of a Jimmy Page or a Jeff Beck—but those bands seemed so distant, as if they were from another planet. Grand Funk seemed so much more attainable and real. They were a blue collar band that sweated and grunted and played their hearts out. They may never have been as cerebral or as ethereal as the European bands of that era, but they had one thing that those other bands could never attain... they were ours!"

And leave it to Grand Funk to play up their American heritage to-the-max. Indeed, in 1972 (after they had expanded their roster to four with the addition of keyboardist Craig Frost) they scored their biggest hit ever with the infectious tune, *We're An American Band*, a song that captured the essence of the unit's party-hearty attitude while allowing the group to finally break through to the commercial mainstream. Rather ironically, *We're An American Band* proved to be both GFR's zenith and nadir, for after reaching the peak of their powers, they would soon plummet from that lofty plateau, never to return again. Perhaps due to the success of that tune, the band assumed a somewhat more "pop" direction on

their next two albums—which were poorly received by the band's long-time, predominantly male followers, and by 1976 the writing was on the wall. The band broke up amid the typical finger pointing and acrimony, with Farner going off to launch a mildly successful solo career while the band's remaining three members tried to keep the fast-cooking ember of the GFR magic alive in a short-lived band called Flint.

"The band's first era was an incredible time for us," Brewer said. "Just think about it: we released a dozen albums in a seven-year span—which is simply unimaginable in today's world. We did more in that period than most of today's bands do in 20 years!"

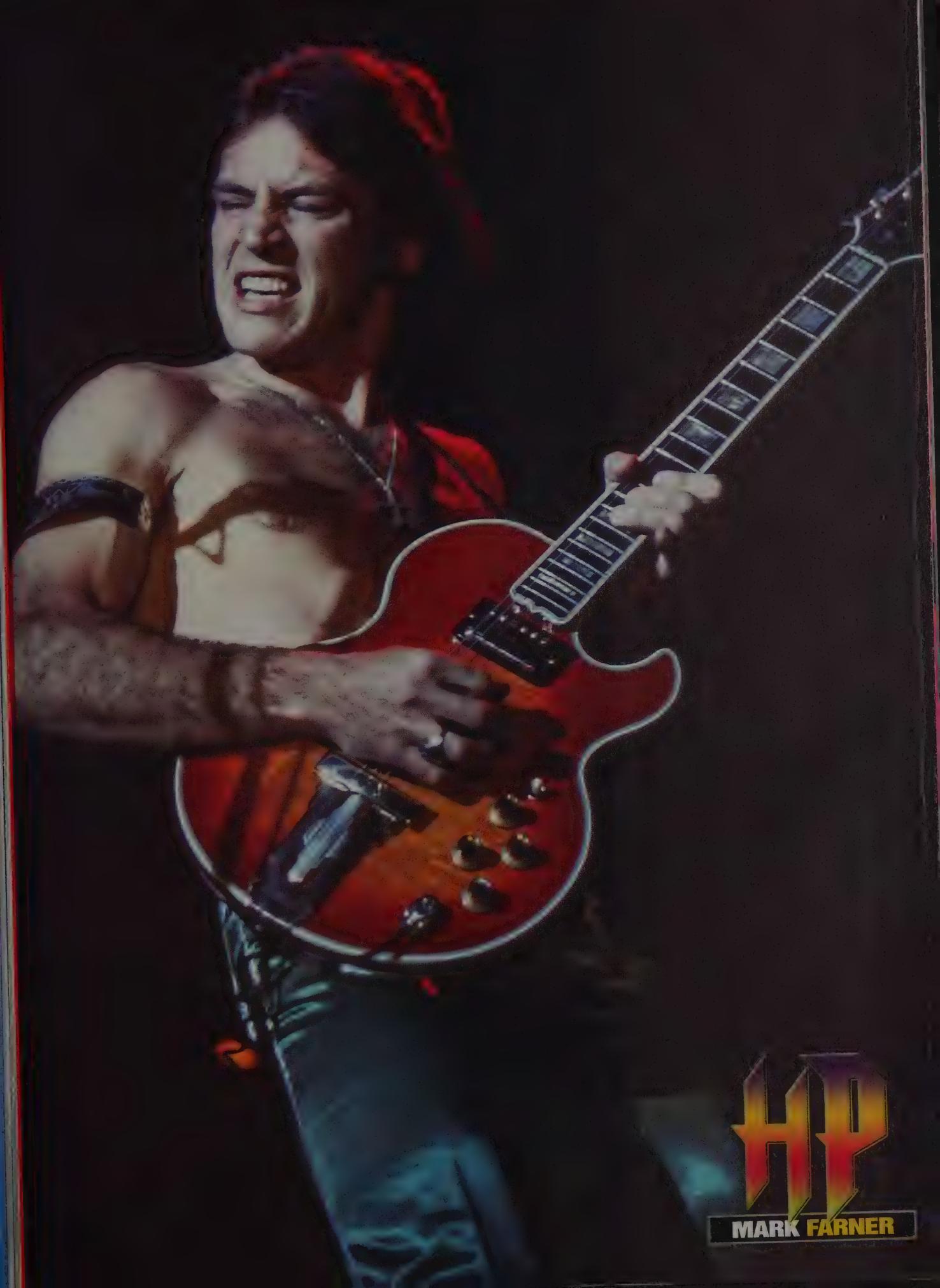
Despite all of their initial accomplishments and the bitter feelings that lingered in the wake of their breakup, by 1980 Farner and Brewer were back together as Grand Funk Railroad (with Dennis Bellinger on bass), and they were ready to rock! They recorded two albums in rapid succession, neither of which managed to reignite the spark of fan interest that had propelled the band along a decade earlier. By 1983 this reunion had run out of steam and once again the band's members headed for the hills. It wasn't until 1998 that a fully reunited unit (Farner, Brewer and Schacher) once again hit the concert stage, playing in front of surprisingly large crowds—many packed with fans who hadn't even been born when GFR first hit the top of the charts. And while Farner once again left the band in 1997, Brewer and Schacher continue to rock on, most recently with former Kiss guitarist Bruce Kulick as a member of the band.

But despite whatever state Grand Funk Railroad may find themselves in today, it does little to detract from the fact that for a brief, shining time in the early '70s, they stood alone as the most successful American hard rock band in the world. Though they never received the kind of hallowed praise heaped upon such contemporaries as Zeppelin, Sabbath and Purple, the fact is that GFR chose to follow a very different path... and they managed to reach the top of the rock pile strictly on their own terms. They were, and will always be, the American Band.

"It's kind of funny and kind of sad how Grand Funk Railroad is so often overlooked when it comes to listing the great hard rock bands of the '70s," said our industry source. "I think anyone would be hard-pressed to fully explain why. They made the most of whatever abilities they had, and they made a lot of fans happy along the way. If that is their legacy, it certainly isn't a bad one to have."

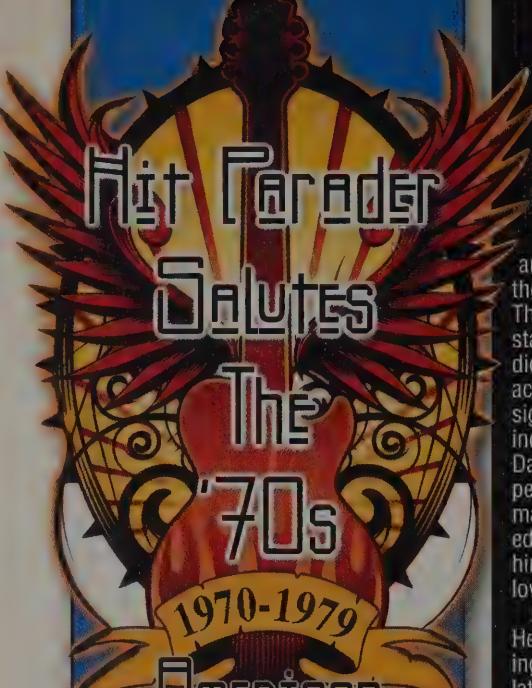


"I've always believed that we've gotten a bad rap; if you go back and listen to those early albums there was a lot of diversity there."



MF

MARK FARMER



Hit Parader Salutes The '70s 1970-1979 American Icons JIMI HENDRIX THE GUITAR GOD

Though his career only lasted nine months into the '70s, the impact that Jimi Hendrix had on the music of that decade is virtually incalculable. Indeed, few musicians of any era have ever had more impact on an art form that James Marshall Hendrix has had on successive generation of rock and roll musicians and fans.

It's hard to believe that the peak of Hendrix' music powers lasted for only three years. That fact can occasionally be lost amid the seemingly endless array of "hits" collections, live releases, box set bonanzas and retrospective reissues that have come our way in the years since his demise. The truth of the matter is that Jimi Hendrix has now been dead for more than 37 years. Yet despite the amount of time that has now passed since his departure from this earthly veil, his music continues to provide an amazingly vibrant legacy for legions of fans, the vast majority of whom weren't even a glimmer in their daddy's eyes when Hendrix was in his rock and roll prime. While some of those albums — more than 30 "official" releases at last count — may sound a tad dated when contrasted with today's studio-sweetened, sonically-enhanced rock fare, the seminal power of The Master's

unmatched guitar wizardry continues to shine on.

Indeed, among the true legends of rock and roll history, few have managed to stand the test of time better than that of Hendrix. Though his time in the blinding spotlight of stardom was amazingly brief, and while he died at the tender age of 27, Hendrix' myriad accomplishments have continued to grow in significance with the passing years. His incredible instrumental virtuosity, his Jimi Dandy stage demeanor, his "voodoo chile" persona and the fact that he was a black man operating with the confines of a decidedly white man's world, all added up to make him a truly unique personality in the hallowed annals of rockdom.

In many ways it is safe to say that without Hendrix' ground-breaking, precedent-shattering accomplishments much of what would later transpire in the contemporary music world would have been unimaginable. Perhaps only the Beatles themselves had more of a lasting impact on the rock scene than this left-handed guitar wizard from Seattle. While to a great extent today's rock kingdom seems to have turned its back on the kind of flash and virtuosity that were Hendrix' calling cards, many of today's biggest stars continue to site his work as a primary motivation for their first forays into the music world.

As unlikely as it may seem, so long after his untimely passing in 1970, these days Hendrix is in many ways hotter than ever before. With some of his most familiar riffs finding a new life as cell phone ring-tones, and a recent auction of long-lost Hendrix ephemera drawing in thousands of bids and millions of dollars, in 2007 this legendary Guitar God is enjoying an unparalleled and somewhat unexpected renaissance. In fact, Hendrix' back catalog of classic albums — as well as his recent slew of "live" and "hits" presentations — continue to sell over a million copies annually, a figure surpassed only by the vibrant catalogs of Elvis, Led Zeppelin and the Beatles.

"Hendrix was perhaps the most significant rock performer of all time," said a record label source. "It wasn't like his music was ever out of style, but it was only a matter of time before a new generation began to appreciate his brilliance."

It probably would be very hard for this seemingly unassuming rocker to imagine that in the 21st Century, his ground-breaking work was still being dissected, analyzed and scrutinized by both fans and fellow musicians, all determined to try and unlock the "secret" to his amazing array of guitar sounds. It's safe to say that Hendrix totally reinvented the rock guitar when he first burst

upon the music scene in 1967, a high-stepping, jive-talking black man with a white guitar, who issued a clarion call to a generation, extolling them to arise and be heard. His songs, such as *Purple Haze*, *Voodoo Child* and *Foxy Lady* remain "classic rock" radio staples, and his influence continues to touch everyone who's ever heard his work.

"Hendrix was *it* for me," said Metallica guitarist Kirk Hammett. "Every time I think I'm getting good, I just go and listen to Hendrix — that puts me in my place in a hurry. He was just amazing. I would pay anything for the chance to have seen him live, but he died long before I even really knew about rock and roll. But maybe every time I play my guitar a little bit of his influence shines through — I certainly hope it does."

For many young fans who are perhaps just beginning to get into Hendrix' music, a trip to their local record store can be a confusing experience — especially when it comes to selecting a few essential Jimi recordings. While there have been so many Hendrix album releases over the years, amazingly the man only recorded three studio albums — *Are You Experienced*, *Axis: Bold As Love*, and *Electric Ladyland* — during his brief but meteoric ascent to the top. Subsequent "best of" collections and "live" albums have flooded the market in the decades since his death, but for a true view of Hendrix' essential musical magic, those original three recordings are impossible to beat.

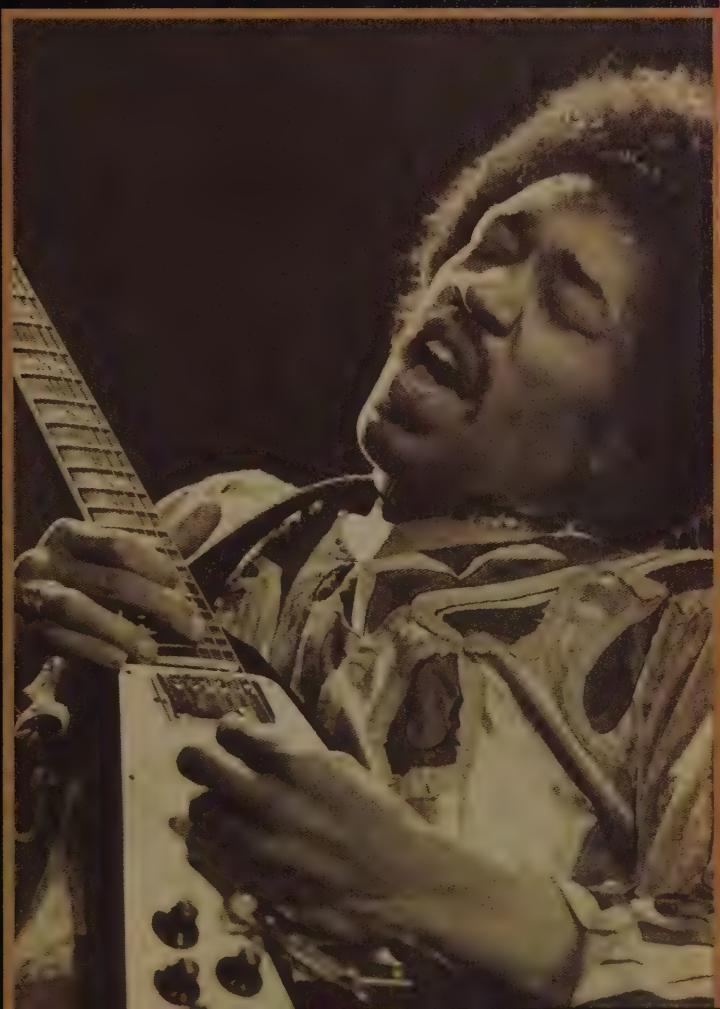
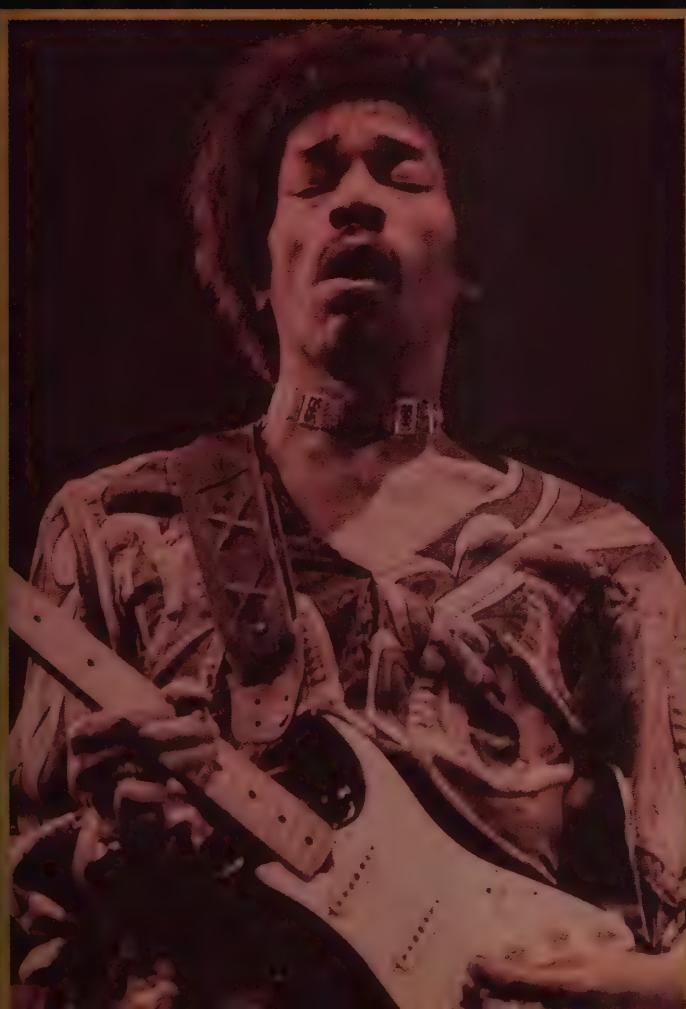
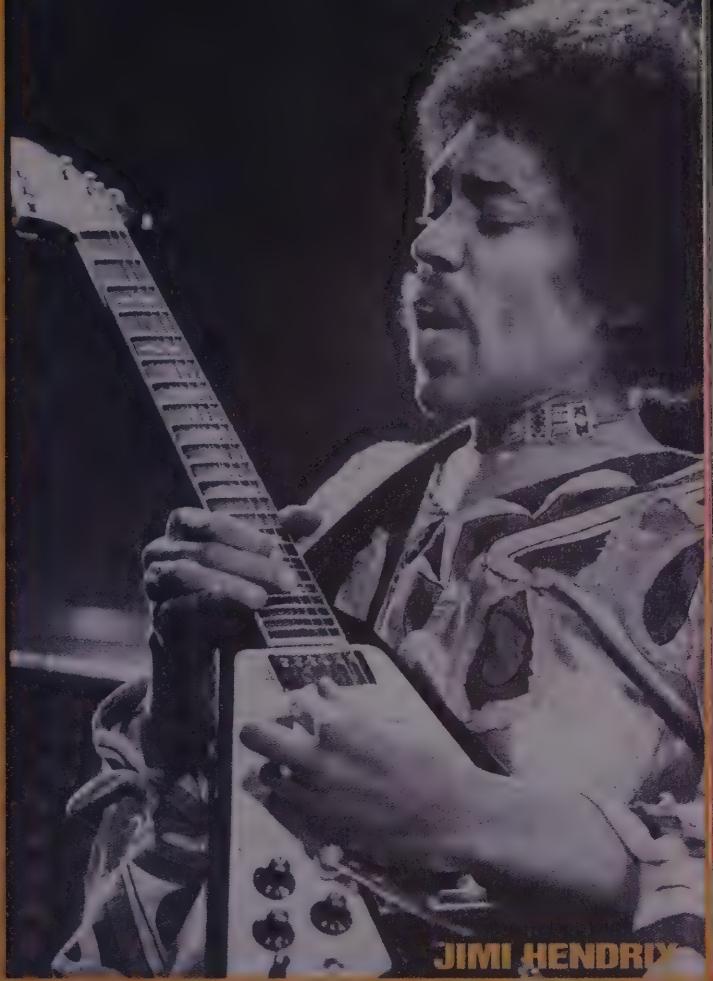
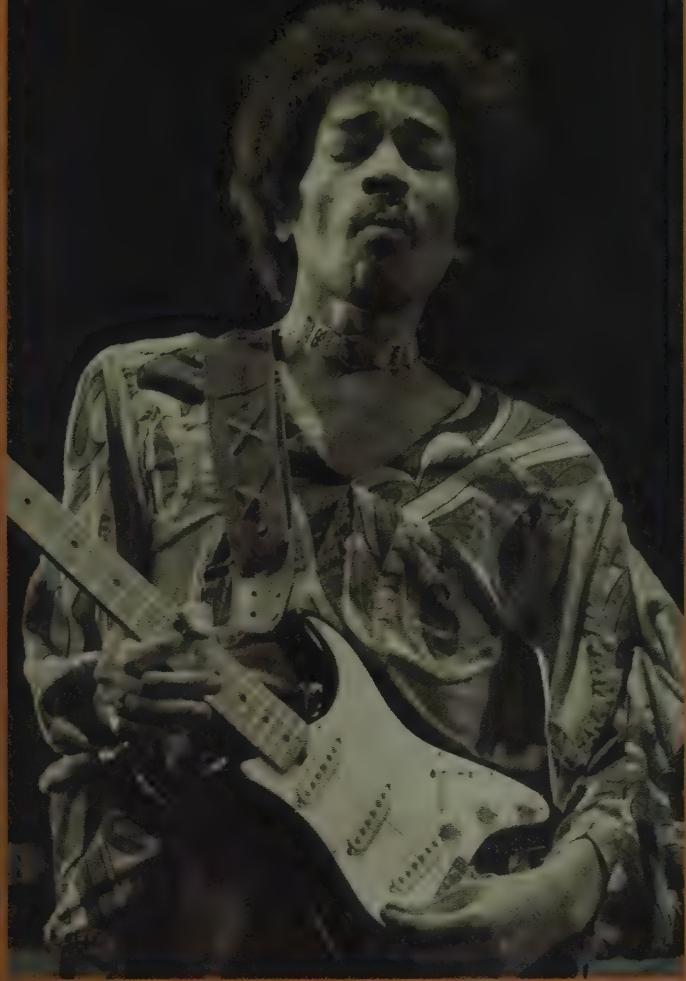
**"Hendrix
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time."**

"We've tried to stay true to Jimi's ideal," said a source at Hendrix' current label. "We've tried to do some inventive things, especially with some recordings that we view as very important historical documents. Our goal is to release only things that add to the Hendrix

legacy and have appeal to both long-time Hendrix followers as well as younger fans."

So can we expect this Hendrix juggernaut to continue in the years ahead? Can there possibly still be more unreleased recordings hiding in a vault somewhere that may eventually see the light of day? As a matter of fact there are, and according to label sources they will eventually emerge in one form or another. Those now in charge of *Experience Hendrix, Inc.* are intent on continuing to mine the Hendrix archives and present the guitarist's music in as tasteful and present a manner as possible. Even so many years after his death, they're all intended to continue the incredible world-wide celebration of the both the music and the man known as Jimi Hendrix.

"There's only one thing you can say about Hendrix," Hammett stated. "He was the very best there ever was and probably ever will be. How many other people can you honestly say that about?"



Hit Parader Salutes The 70s 1970-1979 American Ores

ALICE COOPER SHOCK ROCK PIONEER

Alice Cooper was the Big Bang of shock rock outrage. Prior to the arrival of this androgynous, Detroit-based hard rock "monster," outrageous rock and roll behavior generally consisted of the Stones singing about spending the night together, or raunchy backstage tales of Zeppelin attacking some female follower with a mud shark. But all of that began to seem positively tame when the likes of Alice Cooper (which began as the band's name, but soon became linked directly to that unit's strong-hased, heavily masturbating vocalist) started to present their distinctly different stage and albums presentations—the likes of which, quite simply, had not been witnessed since the fall of the Roman Empire some 2000 years earlier.

With their penchant for pushing the staid limits of '70s entertainment beyond the bursting point, Cooper and cohorts soon became a sensation. Against all apparent odds, their albums such as *Billion Dollar Babies*, *Easy Action* and *Love It To Death* became chart-topping successes, and their highly theatrical, heavily planned, "anything goes" live shows became must-see events that amazed audience and outraged censors

wherever it appeared. Tunes like *I'm Eighteen* became impassioned pleas of cultural alienation, letting an older generation know that something very different—and very disturbing—was going on within their kids. At the same time, all-out rockers like *School's Out* and *Under My Wheels* offered a taste of the Midwestern metal sensibility that would soon come to dominate the decade.

"We were just a bunch of guys from Detroit who loved rock and roll and were trying to get noticed any way we could," said Cooper. "I'd love to say that it was all based on pent-up hostilities and run-away emotion, and there is no doubt in my mind that represented a great part of it. But there was also a lot of thought and planning involved. I guess you could call it artfully contrived chaos."

At the heart of it all was a clever gentleman originally known as Vincent Furnier, who rode his Alice Cooper alter-ego to the pinnacle of '70s fame and infamy. Along with his band (originally featuring guitarists Glen Buxton and Michael Bruce), the AC express ran roughshod through spaced-out American rock society, which at the time seemed more attuned to the drug induced hippie vibes put forth by West Coast bands like the Jefferson Airplane and Grateful Dead than to the caustic, loud and downright scary antics put forth by Alice Cooper. The "plan" worked like a charm, sending the band's singles and albums straight to the top of the charts and cementing the group's live rep (fostered by Cooper's nightly penchant for beheading dolls, brandishing snakes and ending up in an elaborately staged electric chair prop) as a "must see" concert spectacle.

"There really wasn't a precedent for what we were doing," Cooper said. "You'd see the arena rock shows at that time—whether it was Zeppelin or Pink Floyd—and there were a lot of lights, and a lot of standing around. We kind of turned everything inside out. We took some of the focus off of the music, and made the whole show into a theatrical production."

Perhaps in light of what passes for "entertainment" in shock rock circles these days, it's kind of hard to imagine that at one time Alice Cooper was the unquestioned King Of Outrage. But back in his early '70s heyday, Cooper and

his band of hard rock' outlaws rolled out of the Midwest with a look and a sound that took the music world by storm. Alice's outlandish appearance outraged some and amused others, but somehow most everyone immediately sensed that beneath the makeup and bizarre clothing lurked the heart of a commanding beast—a guy who had it all planned out from day one.

No, the golf-loving, TV-game-show-playing Cooper may



have possessed the "live and die for rock and roll" attitude exhibited by such compatriots as Joplin, Morrison and Hendrix, but through his deft songwriting touch, his outrageous showmanship and his skilled business acumen, Cooper emerged as a true rock icon. Without a doubt, his efforts helped open the doors for everyone from Kiss to Motley Crue to Skynyrd, and in the process launched Cooper on a dizzying roller coaster ride through the highs and lows of life.

Today, however, some 25 years later, he still sits at the top of the charts with his most re



paeon to teen angst, *Eighteen*, Cooper is still very much alive and well. In fact, he's still releasing albums on a regular basis (such as 2006's power-packed *Dirty Diamonds*) and touring when and if the mood strikes him. Clearly in the 21st Century, the always-inventive, continually creative Mr. Cooper has once again reinvented himself. No, he hasn't done

year ago.

"This album may be a little heavier than the last few things I did," he said. "But I don't think that I've sacrificed very much in going to a heavier sound. The songs are still very solid, which to me has always been the key ingredient to what I've done. Go back and listen to things from any part of my career, whether it

away with his trademark sneer nor has he put aside his penchant for wearing black leather or outraging the masses. But what Cooper has done is take his music and image to a new plateau,

adding a

www something as dark as *Welcome To My Nightmare*, or a radio hit like *Prison*, and you'll hear that the quality of the music is always there.

Throughout his long and often tempestuous sojourn up the rock mountain, Alice Cooper has maintained a steadfast belief that a good song and a good band remain the keys to both success and longevity. Whether he was wallowing in the depths of depression due to alcohol abuse during the early '80s, or scaling an

expected platinum rise in the '90s, Cooper's hard hitting, yet instantly infectious music has remained his career's lifeline. Much like his British alter-ego, Ozzy Osbourne, Cooper has lived through the ups and downs of the rock lifestyle and is all too willing to tell anyone who'll listen that, to no one's surprise, the "ups" are a hell of a lot better.

"I do make music to make fans happy," he admitted. "Any musician who doesn't really isn't being fair to himself or to the fans. But I long ago stopped trying to figure out what the people wanted... I just decided to do what I liked and hoped that they liked it too. I think I've been right more often than not."

Hit Parader Salutes The '70s 1970-1979 American Odes

VAN HALEN SETTING NEW STANDARDS

H anyone who saw it will never forget it. The year was 1979, and Van Halen was touring North America as the opening act for Black Sabbath. It was far from a well-kept secret that the Sabs were having a tough go of it, with internal problems threatening to tear the band asunder—and indeed, vocalist Ozzy Osbourne was to leave the band within months. But the young upstarts in VH saw Sabbath's problems as their big opportunity to establish their stellar credentials, and night-in and night-out they put on the shows of their lives—high-stakes, energy-packed 40 minute showcases that literally and figuratively blew Sabbath off the stage. It was electric, it was magnetic, it was nothing short of astounding. Van Halen had arrived.

Eddie Van Halen vividly remembers that tour, and he also clearly recalls that when his band's self-titled debut album emerged in 1978 he had no idea how the rock public might react to it. Up to that time the group had more or less lived and performed in the fish bowl known as Los Angeles—a place where they had become the unquestioned kings of the Sunset Strip. Emerging in the wake of the El Lay

easy listening" sound epitomized by the likes of the Eagles and Linda Ronstadt, Van Halen's guitar-heavy, highly theatrical style hit the West Coast like a sucker punch to the chin. Everyone was bowled over; some by the "shocking" energy this band presented, others by the sheer ecstasy of a band that seemed to revel in the pure joy of rock and roll. Still, despite their local acclaim, and their growing buzz on the international rock underground, Eddie still wasn't sure how his band's blitzkrieg approach would go over in the still conservative musical tides of the late '70s.

"Who knew?" he said with a now-knowing smile. "Back then all we wanted to do was get on stage and have a good time. We were as surprised as anyone when that record came out and started to do so well. Our big goal at that time was just to sell enough records to make another one—and maybe get a world tour out of it eventually. I guess we weren't that interested in the money or the fame, all we wanted to do was make sure the party we were having would keep on going."

Party, indeed! Over the ensuing years Van Halen was to establish itself as the ultimate rock and roll party band. Here was a group that destroyed dressing rooms because they found brown M&M's backstage, and cut a swath through groupieville unmatched by any other band this side of Led Zeppelin. With original vocalist David Lee Roth leading the way, guitarist Edward, his drum-bashing brother Alex and ever-ready bassist Michael Anthony quickly changed the very fabric of contemporary rock and roll. Blending their unmatched instrumental dexterity with Roth's Borscht Belt sense of



humor and blond good looks, Van Halen helped revitalize the American hard rock form. Through their ground-breaking efforts, they proved once and for all that a band didn't have to depend on simplistic three-chord riffs (though many of VH's best songs did) or

banal lyrics (though many of VH's best songs did) or studio gimmickry (though many of VH's best songs did) in order to make it to the top. These guys just went out there, plugged in their instruments and waled away, in the process becoming the single most successful American hard rock band of their era.

"I can guarantee you that in the beginning the *last* thought on any of our minds was making a musical statement that was going to last a long time," Edward VH declared. "Probably our biggest goal was to make

"We were as surprised as anyone when that first record came out and started to do so well."

Diamond Dave & Ed
let it rip on stage.



Edie Van Halen &
David Lee Roth

sure that backstage was well stocked in every way and that we got to meet as many fans as possible after the show. It was all just a great time, and that fun came across in the music. It certainly wasn't an act, because we were living the kind of life we were singing about 24 hours a day."

The party-all-night act worked for a long time. Van Halen scored a continual streak of chart-topping albums including **Van Halen**, **Van Halen II** and **Women And Children First**. At the same time, Edward was being hailed far-and-wide as the greatest guitarist of his generation, and the single most influential axe master since Jimi Hendrix. But, unfortunately, as if so often the case with bands that get it all handed to them on a silver platter, the wheels soon began to come off the VH rock and roll express. The band's fondness for partying led to rumored substance problems for both Van Halen brothers, and Roth began believing his own press hype—going so far as to start thinking that he was, in fact, bigger than the band. A split was inevitable, and by the time their landmark disc **1984** was released, word hit the street that not only was Roth planning on doing a solo disc, but he was thinking about pursuing a movie career as well. Roth tried to blame his moves on the VH brothers being "too unpredictable"—the brothers blamed Roth for being "selfish". By 1985 Roth was out and veteran rocker Sammy Hagar was in, and by 1986 the band found itself back at the top of the rock pile with their biggest selling album ever.

"I know what's gonna happen," Roth said shortly after the split. "Ten years from now, when I'm resting on a beach somewhere enjoying myself, the phone is gonna ring. It'll be Ed asking me if I want to come back and do one more tour with the band. You know what I'm gonna do when that happens? I'm just politely gonna say, 'Ed, go screw yourself!'"

Well, much was to happen within VH before that call from Edward to beach-comber Dave actually did occur some 12 years after their initial split—it resulted in the band's now-legendary get-together for the 1998 MTV Music Awards. During the intervening dozen years Van Halen went on to create bigger if not necessarily better things. While many would agree that the band's post-Roth albums, including such multi-platinum smashes as **OU812**, **5150** and **Balance** never came close to attaining the youthful, hell-bent exuberance of their earlier efforts, those same critics would agree that the band did little to diminish their reputation as the finest American rock band ever.

Now, nearly 30 years after they first made their mark on the rock and roll landscape, these eternal 'boys of summer' remain one of the seminal forces in hard rock history. And whether or not their much-discussed "reunion" tour with Diamond Dave leads to bigger and better things (including a rumored new album), there's no denying the incredible impact their look, sound and style continue to exert on the entire rock and roll world.

Hit Parader

Salutes

The '70s

1970-1979

American Dices

TED NUGENT MOTOR CITY MADMAN

There was a brief but magical moment in metal time back in 1976 when Ted Nugent found himself the single most famous face in the hard rock world. His all-powered, sing-along anthem *Cat Scratch Fever* was pervasive, and the image of this fast-talking, long-haired, wild-eyed Motor City Madman—clad in a torn cloth and little else—filled rock publications from London to Los Angeles. And when Terrible Ted hit the tour trail—as he did for an average of 300 days a year throughout that decade—fans were treated to a spectacle that only this pure rock and roll “animal” could produce. Part wild-west spectacle and part side-show attraction, the Nuge on stage would swing from the rafters like Tarzan, and shoot flaming arrows at imaginary targets...while never missing a lick on his over-sized guitar. It was theater, comedy and a hard rock show all rolled into one—and Nugent loved every second of it.

“That’s what happens when a red-blooded American male lets his hormones run wild,” he said. “There were no drugs and no alcohol involved—those just inhibit your mind and body. I was working on pure Nugent-styled adrenaline.”

Obviously, the Nuge has always been one of rock’s most outspoken and outrageous personalities. Got a topic? Just ask

this Michigan native about it and you’re liable to end up with a 20-minute discourse on the subject. World peace? You *really* want to know. Terrible Ted’s solution? Welfare? You might not like what the man has to say. Gun control? Don’t get him started. Yup, ol’ Ted is certainly a free thinker, someone who sure as hell doesn’t give a damn about “political correctness”, a man whose views make Rush Limbaugh’s look downright liberal! Yet somehow, despite being the antithesis of the standard quasi-radical, loyal liberal rock psycho babble, Nugent has managed to survive and prosper in the rock wars for the better part of 40 years. Unquestionably, this gun-toting, bow-shooting rock and roll wildman, has always done it his way.

“People know what I stand for; they’re interested in hearing about my opinions on hunting, conservation and politics as well as on rock and roll,” he said. “I’m being called to speak at youth organizations all across the country. I also speak at young lawyers and law enforcement conventions. I’ve also been doing my own radio show. I’m the best—nobody can touch me and when the opposition even dares to say a word, I make them do a breast stroke in their own vomit.”

Certainly Nugent has never been one to suffer from lack of ego. In fact, his strong opinions on everything from war to peace—and just about everything in between—have managed to enrage just about everyone within earshot. But that’s fine with Ted. Love ‘em or hate ‘em, the only thing he can’t stand is when somebody ignores him. And let’s face it; the guy does have much to brag about...including half-a-dozen platinum albums and an image that has become one of the most recognizable in rock history. But as we all can plainly see, there’s more to this unique personality than just rock and roll. This is truly a man for all seasons—*hunting* seasons, that is! It’s great when someone can turn his hobbies into his career, and in the case of Nugent, he’s done it more than once. Aside from his legendary rock and roll career, his success as a hunter has opened up countless new business opportunities for this Detroit native.

“One of the things I’m very proud of was hosting a *Ted Nugent: Spirit Of The Wild* series for PBS stations throughout the Midwest a few years ago,” he said. “I guarantee, my friends, that it set new records nationwide for pledged income to PBS. The show featured four of my TV specials—*The Hunting Lifestyle*, *A Day In The Life of the Ted Nugent Ranch*, *A Father and Son Hunting in Quebec, Canada*, and *The Ultimate Beast Nugent Tales*. Before long I’m going to be a five-headed media monster that no one will be able to touch.”

Still, when all is said and done, it is music that has always played the central role in Nugent’s life. The hunting is great, the radio and TV exposure is fun, but there’s still nothing quite like slipping on a guitar, plugging it into a mountain of amps, and then attacking 10,000 rabid fans with the same ferocity with which he attacks a grizzly bear. And as he showed during his run last year on MTV’s *Supergroup*—where he formed an “instant band” with the likes of Scott Ian and Jason Bonham—as well as on his

latest album, *Love Grenade*, the Huge Nuge has proven that he is still very much a pure-bred, one-of-a-kind rock and roll beast.

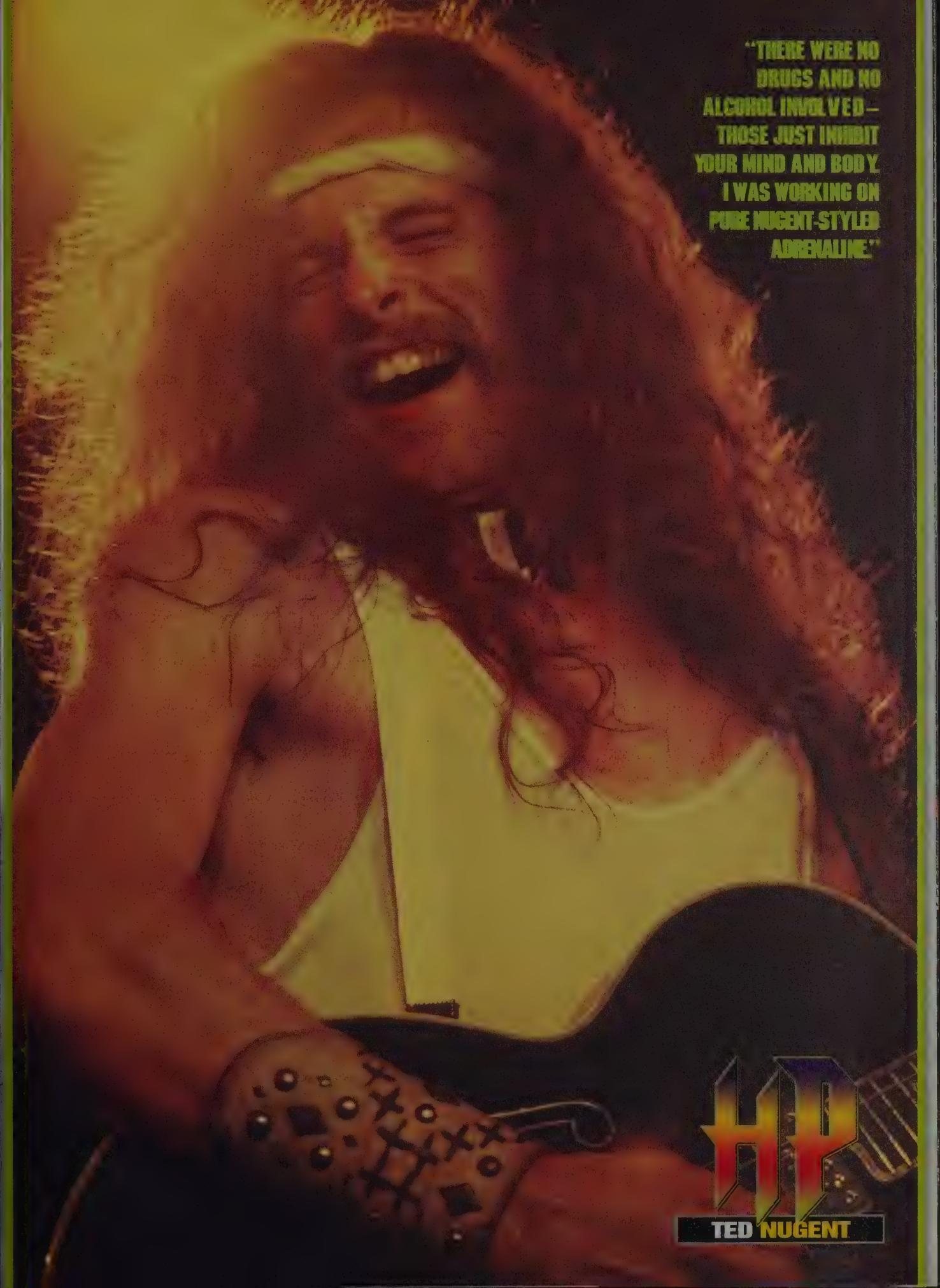
“The music I make is a manifesto with gusto,” he said. “No question about it. I realize now that when I fought the hardest back in the ‘70s to not let anyone in the recording procedure compromise my guitar sounds, those were my biggest records. That threatening rumble is the gist of everything that is Nugent music, and that’s what is still going to be projected beyond your wildest dreams on any new music I make.”

How can a guy who’s recorded more than 30 albums during his lengthy career (including stints with everyone from ‘60s acid rockers, the Amboy Dukes, to ‘80s hair farmers, Damn Yankees), possibly still be so revved, so stoked, so totally over-the-top about his music at this stage of his life? Well, in all honesty, Ted still thinks *every* album he records is going to be the one that’ll tilt the planet just a bit more off its axis.

“Upon reviewing my career, I realize unequivocally that the most exciting music and my favorite stuff happens to coincide with my biggest selling records,” he said. “You know why? Because it wasn’t produced, it was *revered*. If you have reverence for the sonic and the thrust of your creation musically, then you’ll make sure that the drums sound like the drums you play in a garage, you will make sure that the guitar sounds like the guitar you play in a smoky, short-skirt, filth-ridden club. And these sounds are what separate my successful selling records from my less successful selling records. So I have discovered the system by which not to process the instrumentation, but to enhance the guttural level of the instrumentation. In other words, the guitar has got to sound like a real guitar, not some electronic thing. You’ve got to hear it work, you’ve got to hear the metal strings, you’ve got to hear the pick hitting it, you’ve got to actually be able to hear the flesh against the strings when you’re playing them. That’s what my music is about.”

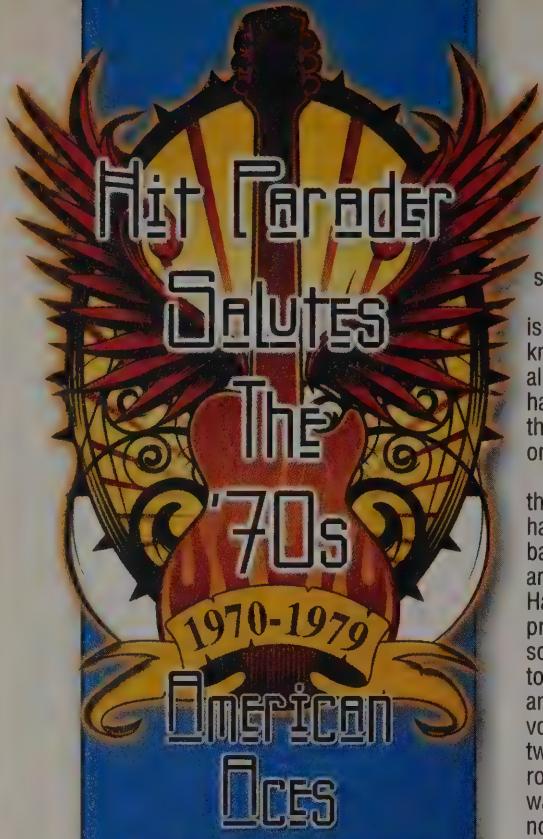


PHOTO: FRANK WHITE



"THERE WERE NO
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Hit Parader Salutes The '70s 1970-1979 American Ores

MONTROSE BREAKING BARRIERS

Sometimes it's a sad twist of rock and roll fate that the true innovators get lost amid the yellowing pages of music history. Sometimes those brave souls that first reach for a lofty creative plateau must wait for others to follow in their wake before society begins to recognize their true accomplishments. And sometimes such recognition never comes... no matter how much respect those in The Know may choose to send their way.

For the most part, such was the story of Montrose, one of the truly pioneering forces in American hard rock. It could well be argued—by those that argue such things—that without the ground-breaking early '70s efforts of guitarist Ronnie Montrose and his crew, there might never have been a band like Van Halen, who hit the scene runnin' some six years later. Of course the fact that Montrose's original vocalist was a gent named Sammy Hagar—who a decade after leaving Montrose would enjoy a reasonable degree of acclaim fronting that said-same VH—only helps foster that notion. So does the idea that Ted Templeman—the man responsible for creating the Van Halen "sound" on that band's first albums—also just-so-happened to produce Montrose's initial discs. Indeed, perhaps it isn't going out on a limb too far to surmise that the entire West Coast Metal Explosion that

rocked the world throughout the '80s may have been little more than a pipe dream without the ground-breaking work supplied by this California-based unit.

"I've heard people make those comparisons," Montrose said. "But I don't really know how true they are. If those early albums helped influence some kids who may have followed us, then I take great pride in that. But we never set out to be pioneers... only to be the best band we could be."

The fact is, when we speak of Montrose in their role as ground-breaking pioneers of the hard rock world, we're referring to only the band's first two albums, 1973's *Montrose* and 1974's *Paper Money*. After that point Hagar split to launch what would quickly prove to be a highly successful decade-long solo career, while the band would continue to rock on—with increasingly less power and prestige—with a succession of other vocalists. But, oh, what an impact those first two discs would make upon an unsuspecting rock world! At a time when progressive rock was running wild, and even the era's most notable heavy metal bands were often presenting long, drawn-out album opuses, the short, fast, intense bursts of pure hard rock emotion that filled such Montrose tunes as *Rock Candy*, *Bad Motor Scooter* and *I Got the Fire* seemed to exude the energy of a two-year old trapped amid the residents of an old age home.

"In retrospect it's easy to see the lineal link between Montrose and a whole legion of American-styled rock acts that followed, including Kiss and Van Halen," said an East Coast radio personality. "On one hand you had bands like Yes, Emerson Lake & Palmer and Led Zeppelin who were routinely putting 8 minute songs on albums... or creating half-hour single song monstrosities on stage. Then along came Montrose, which featured an almost AM-radio philosophy—great, guitar-driven songs that rarely hit the four minute mark. That created a style of American hard rock that a ton of bands have followed over the years."

It wasn't as if his band's first two historic albums represented Ronnie Montrose's initial taste of acclaim. After all, he had appeared on Van Morrison's brilliant 1971 disc *Tupelo Honey*—where he first encountered Templeman, who was at that album's production helm. He also was a charter member of the Edgar

Winter Group, whose Montrose-driven single, *Free Ride*, was one of the biggest songs of 1972. In fact, it was his exposure within Edgar Winter that first gave him to confidence to break away and launch a band of his own. Joining together with a then little-known Hagar, drummer Denny Carmassi and bassist Bill Church (the later of whom he had met during those *Tupelo Honey* sessions) Montrose quickly landed a record deal and produced their self-titled debut disc within six months of first joining forces.

The album received immediate media focus and radio attention. But while the media generally praised it, and fans rallied to its support, the disc never achieved the kind of sales recognition it perhaps deserved. None-the-less, a heavy road regimen soon commenced which saw Montrose tour the face of North America non-stop for most of the next year. Almost amazingly, they found time amid the road trekking to again join forces with Templeman to produce *Paper Money*, which emerged, in true

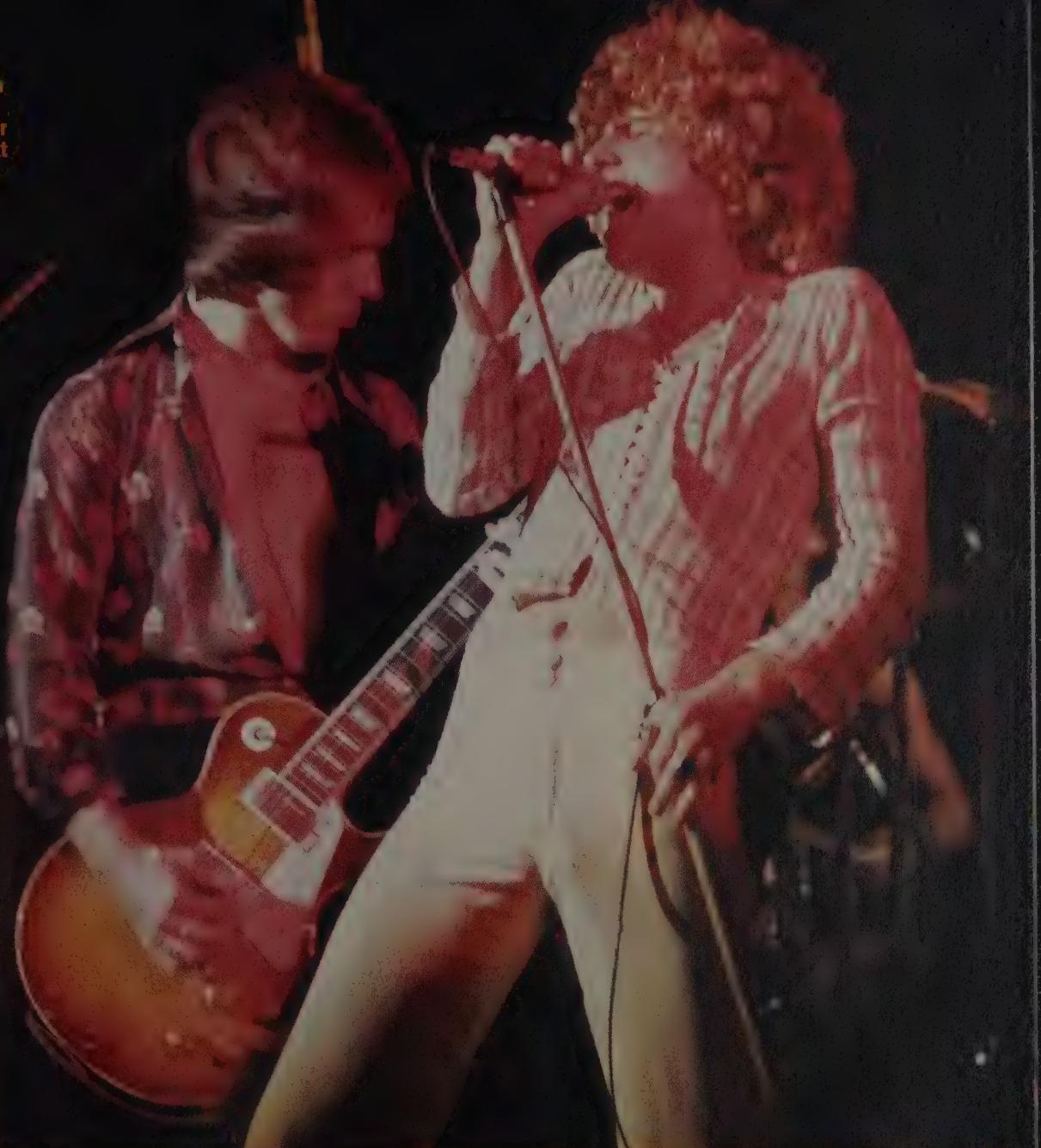
70s

Ronnie Montrose



PHOTO: BOB LEAF

Yes, that's a
very young
Sammy Hagar
standing next
to Ronnie...



"If those early albums helped influence some kids who may have followed us, then I take great pride in that."

style, only a year after their first album had hit the streets.

"That's the way bands worked back then," Hagar said. "You'd put an album out and then hit the road. There wasn't MTV or national radio that could help break an album right away. You needed to do it market by market, playing live, and hoping that radio picked up on your

single. It was hard work... but it was also a lot of fun."

Montrose's original run would consist of four albums, including 1975's **Warner Brothers Presents Montrose** and 1976's **Jump On It** (both featuring vocalist Bob James), before the band's creative momentum began to run out of steam. They would reform in 1987 to record **Mean**—which was a rather blatant attempt to latch on to the then-burgeoning hard rock scene which, rather ironically, they helped create. But that album failed to generate any significant degree of fan or media interest.

However, because of the fact that Hagar always held his early association with Montrose near and dear to his heart (he's

continued to perform **Bad Motor Scooter** on stage throughout his solo career), a mini-reunion of original Montrose members has occurred from time-to-time. First back in 1997, Hagar invited that lineup to perform **Leaving the Warmth of the Womb** on his **Marching to Mars** album. Then, as recently as 2005, he has on occasion brought the band members on stage with him for an encore jam—which invariably brings the show to a rousing climax.

"There's an energy when we all get together that really special," Hagar said. "Ronnie is a great guitarist, and I've had Denny in my solo bands for years. It's great when we can all get together... everyone has a good time."

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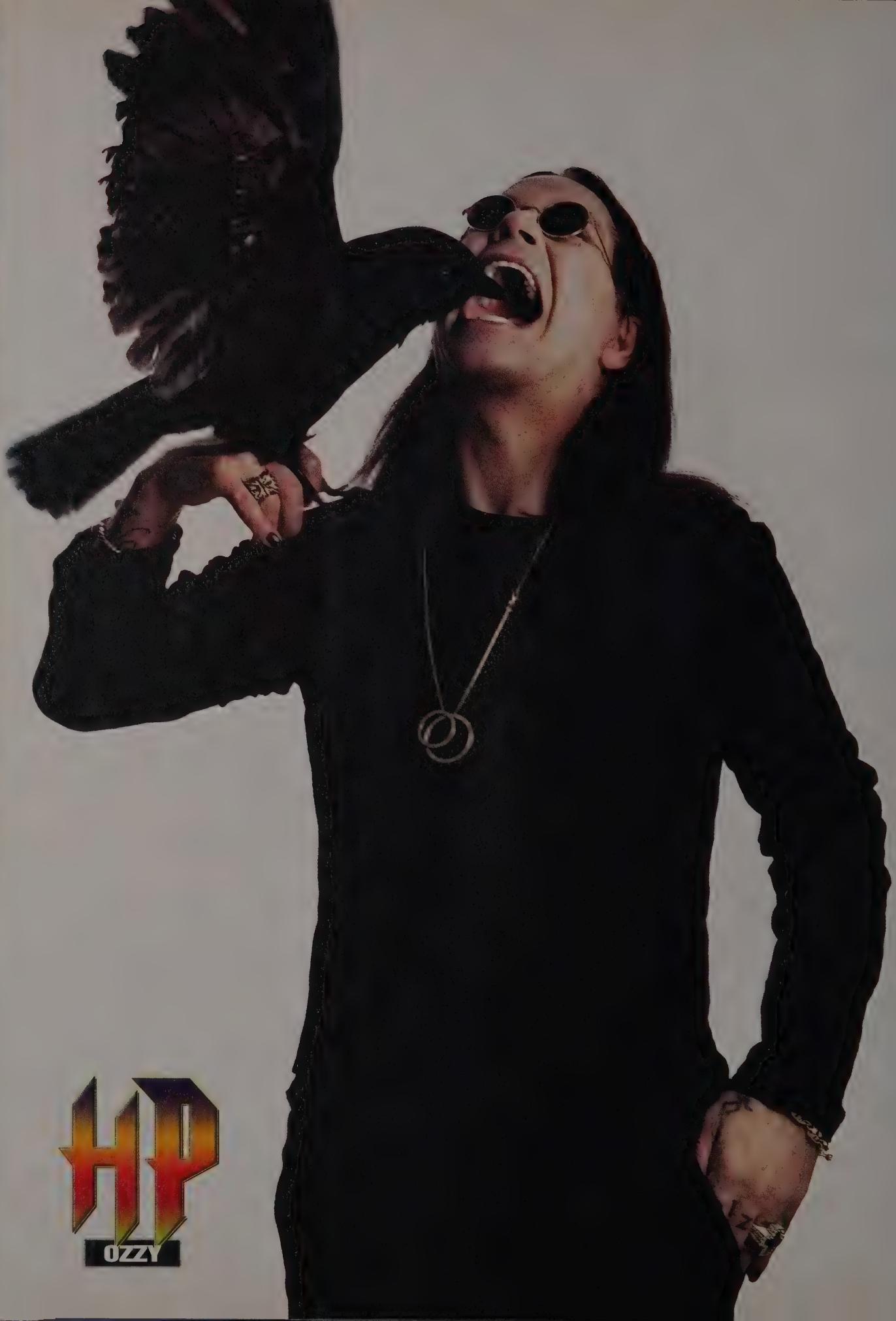
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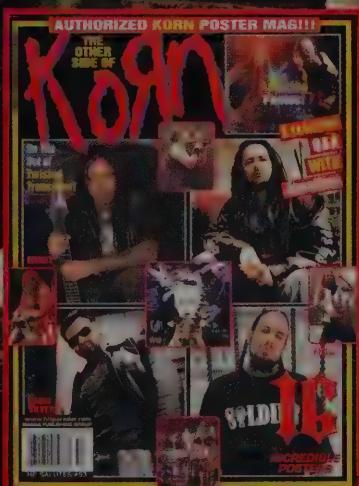
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OZZY

HIT PARADE PRESENTS

KORN

THE OTHER SIDE... AND BEYOND POSTER SPECIAL!

16 INCREDIBLE
POSTERS
PLUS
OUTRAGEOUS
INTERVIEWS!



Here it is... the ULTIMATE salute to Korn, one of the most respected and influential bands in hard rock history, on the release of their new album, See You On The Other Side. In addition to 16 Giant-Size Posters featuring Jonathan, Fieldy, Munky and David, there are exclusive interviews and profiles—including an exclusive on-the-set report on the band's explosive Twisted Transistor video.

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KORN AD



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HEAVEN & HELL



HIT PARADER PRESENTS

THE ULTIMATE

SLIPKNOT

POSTER MAGAZINE!!
16 INCREDIBLE POSTERS
PLUS OUTRAGEOUS
INTERVIEWS!

Things are hotter than ever in the world of Slipknot. Indeed, in many ways this is the start of a new day, a new era and possibly a new revolution for the one and only Knot. For d.j. Sid Wilson, bassist Paul Gray, guitarist James Root, drummer Joey Jordison, keyboardist Craig Jones, percussionist Chris Fehn, percussionist Shawn "Clown" Crahan, guitarist Mick Thompson and vocalist Corey Taylor (also known to their ever-loyal followers as 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8) it's time to focus all of their collective energies into once again becoming the most infamous heavy metal band on Earth. Now with the appearance of their new album, Vol. 3 (The Subliminal Verses), and the start of their various world-wide tours, you'd have to be both blind and deaf not to note that this cover-wearing, mask-bearing, hard rocking unit from the wilds of Des Moines, Iowa, has returned to the scene just in time to give the entire metal world a much needed kick in the pants. With all that in mind, Hit Parader offers this salute to the one and only Slipknot in the form of our incredible poster special. This is one you don't want to miss!

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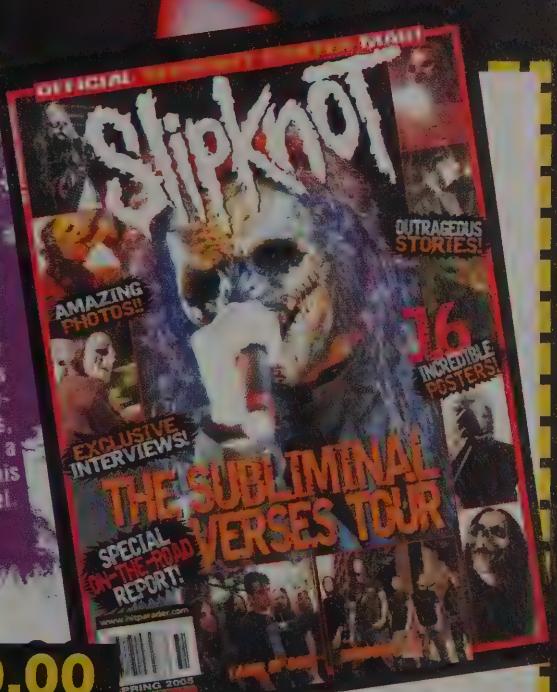
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SLIPKNOT AD





HIT PARADER PRESENTS

10TH ANNIVERSARY POSTER MAGAZINE!

10 INCREDIBLE
POSTERS PLUS
OUTRAGEOUS
INTERVIEWS!



Just saying the word Ozzfest to a generation of heavy metal fans is enough to send them into fits of pure technical ecstasy. For 10 amazing years, this beloved brain child of Sharon and Ozzy Osbourne has served as the ultimate showcase for hard rock's guitar-driven, ear-blasting charms. From coast to coast (and overseas, as well), Ozzfest has stood the test of time to now rank as a true rock and roll institution. In 2005, as Ozzfest celebrates its 10th Anniversary, there can be no question that it now ranks as the premier event of its kind in the known universe. With this year's Fest featuring the stellar skills of Black Sabbath, Iron Maiden, Mudvayne, Velvet Revolver and Rob Zombie along with a host of up-and-coming metal master blasters including the likes of Killswitch Engage, Mastodon and Soilwork, Ozzfest 2005 promises to be the best of this premier Fest's decade-long run. With all that in mind, Hit Parader is proud to offer this heart-felt 80-page, 16 poster salute to the most hallowed event in heavy metal history...OZZFEST!

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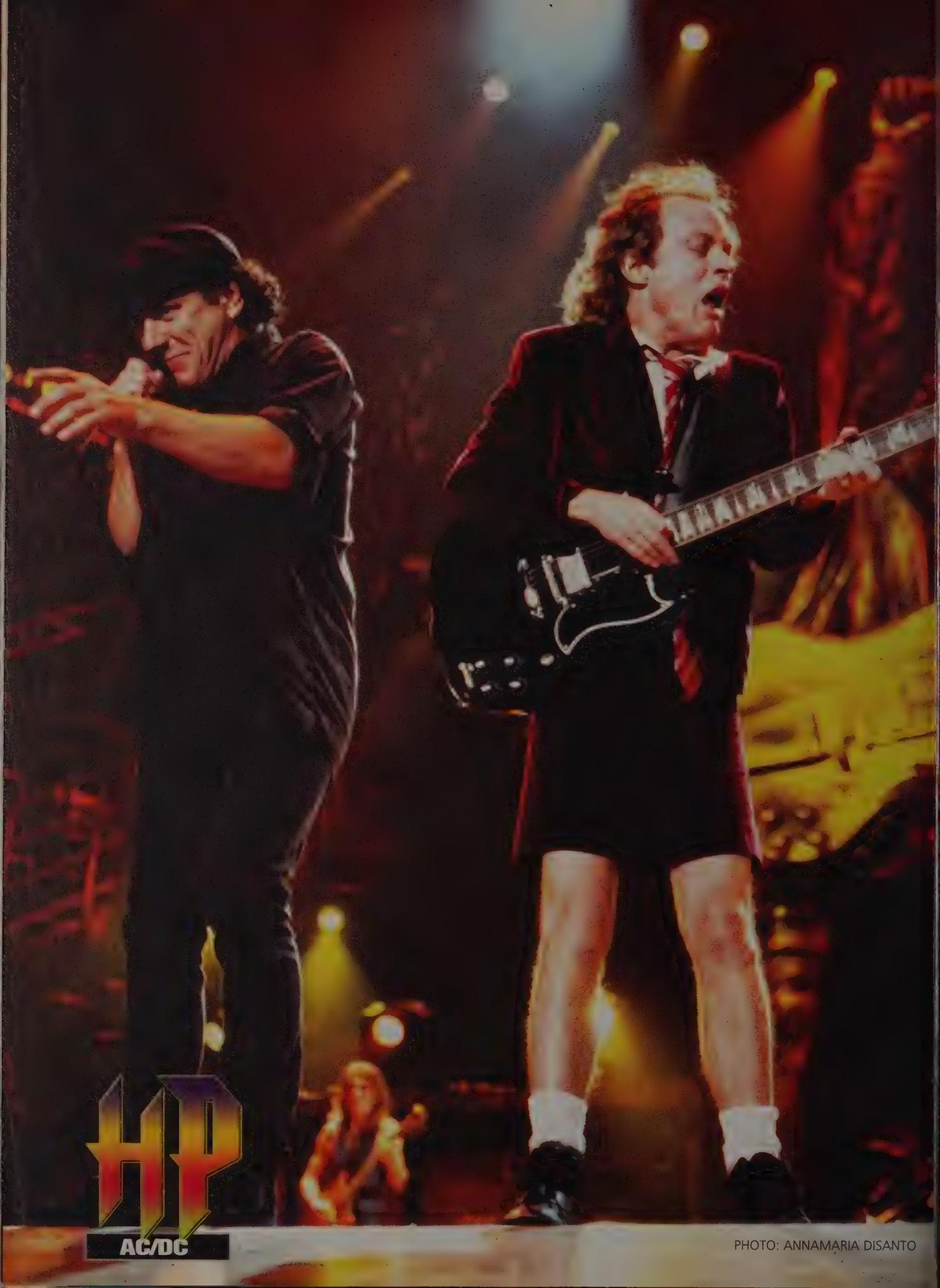
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OZZFEST AD



AC/DC

PHOTO: ANNAMARIA DISANTO

HEAVY METAL'S ALL-TIME TOP 100 GUITARISTS VOCALISTS BASSISTS & DRUMMERS®

100

incredible vocalists... 100 hallowed guitarists... 100 legendary bassists & drummers. Where else but in this super-sized, super-spectacular **Hit Parader** collector's edition of **Heavy Metal's All-Time Top 100s** would you be able to find not one... not two... but all **THREE** of our massive compilations in one convenient issue. We scoured our voluminous files, dug deep into our unmatched archives to gather together the insightful tidbits and top-secret information needed to create these in-depth, comprehensive, and dare-we-say-it (yeah, we dare!) **CONTROVERSIAL** lists that have each shaken the hard rock world to its very core. Here, presented together for the very first time, our lists of Metal's All-Time Top 100 Vocalists, Guitarists and Bassists & Drummers seem guaranteed to heat up conversations around the office water cooler and keep debates raging until the wee hours in college dorm rooms. Ahh, but don't thank us for all our hard work... we loved every second of it. So sit back and enjoy our initial super-sized **Hit Parader** collector's issue, dedicated to the best that the heavy metal form has ever had to offer.

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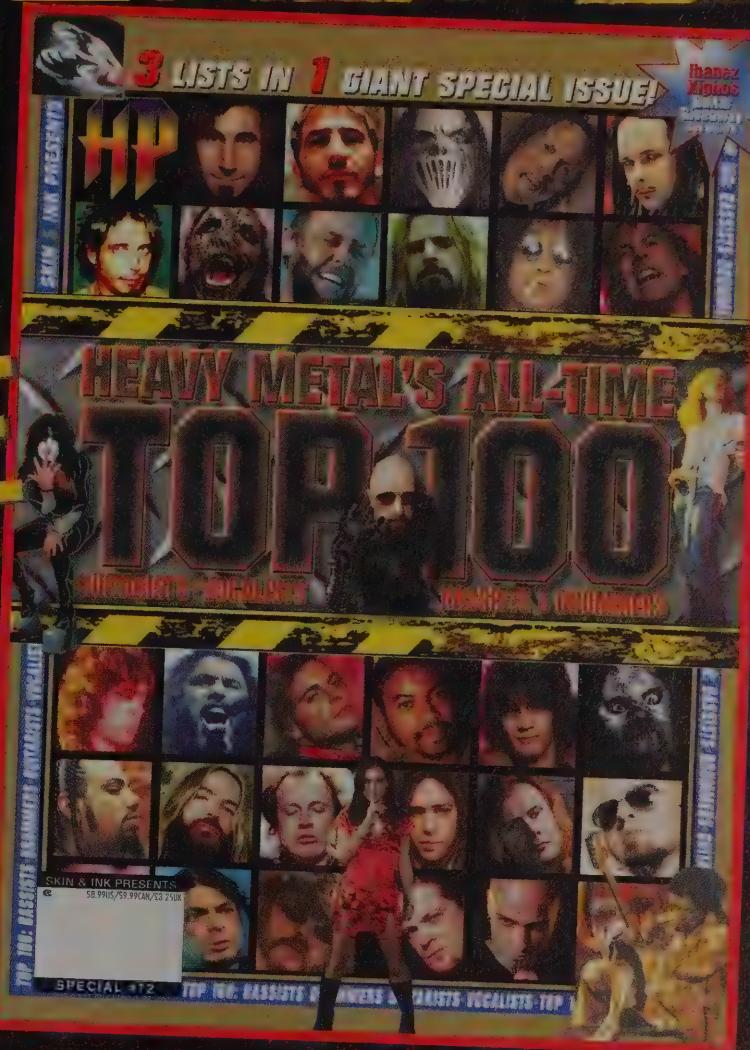
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GAMES & GEAR

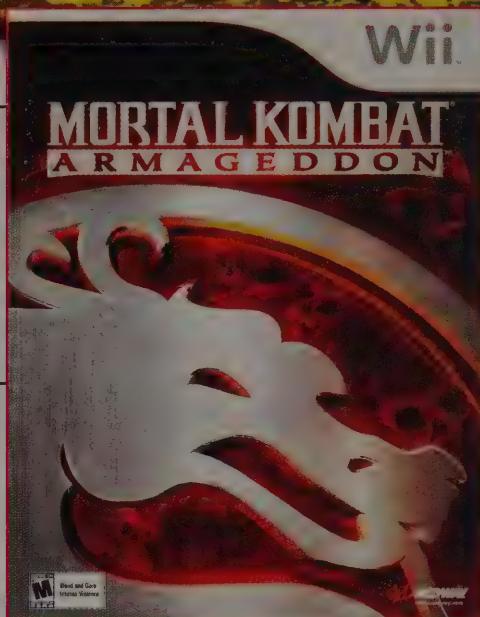
TOYS IN THE ATTIC

BY FRANK CAFIERO

MORTAL COMBAT: ARMAGEDDON

Midway the makers of some incredible video games introduces **Mortal Kombat: Armageddon**—the latest chapter in the award-winning, best-selling video game fighting franchise. With the most complete **Mortal Kombat** roster ever, including every character from the **Mortal Kombat** fighting universe, revolutionary Create-A-Fighter and Create-A-Fatality modes, plus a brand new Konquest mode, **Mortal Kombat: Armageddon** promises to be the most complete, intensely lethal, fighting experience ever!

For more info go to www.midway.com.



McFarlane Toys: BON JOVI & RICHIE SAMBORA

As they say, "100 million Bon Jovi fans can't be wrong."

The legacy that Bon Jovi has created over the last three decades is an undeniable force in American rock music. While many bands from the '80s have been relegated to the history books, Bon Jovi's evolution has bridged the gap of generations and made them one of the truly indelible names in rock & roll.

"Bon Jovi is one of the most consistent and recognizable rock bands of all time," says **McFarlane Toys** CEO Todd McFarlane. "Not only did they rock stadiums and arenas during the '80s, but they have also been doing it in the '90s." They have sold more than 100 million albums worldwide and have performed in excess of 2,500 concerts in 50 countries before more than 32 million people.

Now **McFarlane Toys** has captured Jon Bon Jovi and Richie Sambora, the primary creative force behind Bon Jovi, as incredible life-like figures. With an uncanny likeness to the two sensational frontmen the artist at **McFarlane** have outdone themselves. Guitars, mics, tattoos, jackets and jeans have been painstakingly reproduced to create an unbelievable likeness.

Figures are over 6 inches tall and come complete with guitar, mic, mic stand, and a base to mount this dynamic duo. For more info go to www.mcfarlanetoys.com.



STRANGE SOUNDS

By Mark Brend

Theremin, Clavioline, Doncamatic, Marxophone. These strange musical devices and many more get their day in an entertaining new history of unusual instruments. Backbeat Books' *Strange Sounds* explores the role of

unusual instruments in creating unforgettable hit songs and recounts how world-famous musicians and producers moved beyond guitar, bass, drums, and keyboards to create great records. This exhaustively researched book unearths the stories behind those unusual sounds and offbeat instruments that

made them, and offers a look inside some of the most innovative minds in music.

For more info go to www.scifihobby.com.

STRANGE SOUNDS

MARK BREND

42 PAGES

THE COMPLETE JAMES BOND 007 TRADING CARDS



JAMES BOND THE COMPLETE JAMES BOND

Rittenhouse Archives has assembled the largest set of 007 trading cards set ever, with its upcoming *The Complete James Bond*. The 190-card set will cover all 21 Bond films from *Dr. No* to *Casino Royale*. Each box contains 1 autograph card and 1 relic card, and signers include Honor Blackman, Ursula Andress, Famke Janssen, Izabella Scorupco, Yaphet Kotto, Judi Dench (M), Mads Mikkelsen and many more.

This is also the very first Bond card series to feature relic cards, as **EON Productions** opened its archives to

Rittenhouse. Some of the exciting props include:

- Cayman Island Bank Check from *Die Another Day*
- Fontainebleau Letterhead from *Goldfinger*
- San Monique Flag from *Live and Let Die*
- Casino Chips from *License To Kill*
- Zorin Industries Patch from *A View To A Kill*
- Fontainebleau Score Sheet from *Goldfinger*
- Jinx Medical File from *Die Another Day*
- Tarot Cards from *Live and Let Die*
- Casino Chips from *The World Is Not Enough*
- Playing Cards from *Casino Royale*

As a bonus, each case will come with an exclusive case-topper dual costume card featuring the Tuxedo and Shirt worn by Daniel Craig as James Bond in *Casino Royale*.

For more info go to www.scifihobby.com.

HP DVD REVIEWS

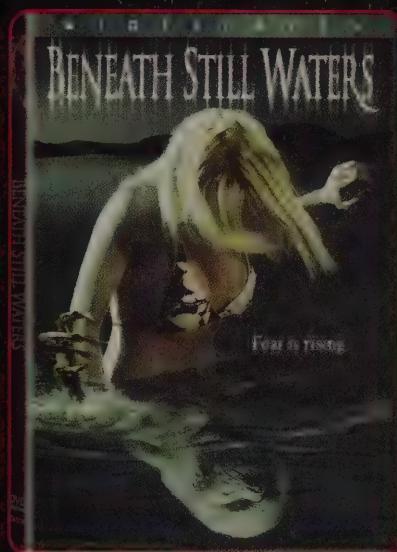
BENEATH STILL WATERS

When two young boys unleash an ancient demonic force they unknowingly doom their small town of Marinbad. Forty years later, in a neighboring town,

strange disturbances and freaky occurrences and of course a few dead bodies, point to the resurrection of a long dormant evil. An evil that threatens to destroy the entire town and all its residents.

Now it's up to an upcoming reporter and a world weary photojournalist to stop this unholy threat before the whole town of Dearia is flooded and all the inhabitants drowned.

Based on the novel by acclaimed author Matthew J. Costello and directed by the infamous horror director Brian Yuzna, *Beneath Still Waters* is a terror filled flick with plenty of suspense and plenty of dismembered body parts. For more info go to www.lionsgatetv.com.



300

The epic graphic novel by Frank Miller (*Sin City*) assaults the screen with the blood, thunder and awe of its ferocious visual style faithfully recreated in an intense blend of live-action and CGI animation. Retelling the ancient Battle of Thermopylae, it depicts the titanic clash in which King Leonidas (Gerard Butler) and 300 Spartans fought to the death against Xerxes (Rodrigo Santoro) and his massive Persian army.

Special Features:

- Audio Commentary - Director Zack Snyder, Writer Kurt Johnstad and Director of Photography Larry Fong
- Deleted Scenes - with Introduction by Zack Snyder
- Featurette - The 300- Fact or Fiction?, Who Were The Spartans: The Warriors of 300 Frank Miller Tapes, Behind the scenes peeks on the set of 300.

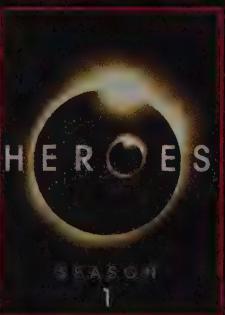
For more info go to www.warnerbros.com.



HEROES: SEASON 1

Discover the phenomenon that is sweeping audiences everywhere as *Heroes: Season 1* comes to DVD! Experience the suspense, mystery, and electrifying twists as this astonishing series follows seemingly unconnected, ordinary people around the globe who discover they have extraordinary powers. As they come to terms with their unique abilities, their risky decisions will affect the futures of everyone around them...and the world. Join their epic journey in this seven-disc set packed with hours of fascinating and revealing bonus features, including the never-before-aired series premiere from show creator Tim Kring.

For more info go to www.universal.com.



ALTER BRIDGE

BY P.J. MERKLE

Mark Tremonti is convinced that with the release of Alter Bridge's second album, **Blackbird**, this unit is finally ready to fully step out of the large shadows cast by his previous band, Creed. Along with vocalist Myles Kennedy, bassist Brian Marshall and drummer Scott Phillips, Tremonti believes that this time around Alter Bridge has firmly placed their own inimitable stamp on the rock and roll world, creating a series of powerful, guitar-driven anthems that tear things up with power, passion and precision. He knows all-too-well that even after the success of the group's successful 2004 debut, **One Day Remains**, there are still those who look askance at *anything* associated with Creed—the multi-platinum supergroup that continually rode their overwrought style and quasi-religious message to the top of the charts. But he also knows that with **Blackbird** Alter Bridge have created a disc that will serve to not only separate them from their past, but also from the rest of the current hard rock horde. Recently we hooked up with Tremonti and Kennedy to discuss the latest developments in the ever-intriguing world of Alter Bridge.

Hit Parade What does **Blackbird** sound like to you?

Mark Tremonti: In some ways this is like a first album for us in that Myles is so much more involved with every aspect of the writing and recording. I had written virtually all the material for our last album before Myles joined the band, so by the time we got around to recording it, his contributions to the actual material itself was rather minimal. We're still very proud of the music on **One Day Remains**, but this one takes us to some very exciting new places with our music. To our ears, this album begins to fulfill the true promise that Alter Bridge has.

Myles Kennedy: Mark is such a brilliant song writer that it can be a little intimidating to come up to him with ideas. But over the last few years, especially as we spent time together on the road, we developed a chemistry and an understanding of how my writing could work to enhance his. That's also true about my guitar playing. When I joined the band I doubt that Mark even knew that I played guitar. But on tour we'd jam together between shows and at soundchecks, and now we've incorporated my playing both on the album and on stage.

HP: With Myles more involved, did that speed up, or slow down, the creative process for **Blackbird**?

MT: We never felt any particular pressure about getting this album together. We were working very much on our own schedule. It's taken us three years to get everything sounding just the way we wanted to. So if you take that into consideration, I don't know if Myles' increased involvement had that much impact on the speed at which we worked. Our goal was to make the best album we could, and have a great time while doing it. I'm happy to say that I feel like we accomplished both of those goals.

MK: When you're working with someone like Mark, you get caught up in the whole music process so much that time becomes totally irrelevant. It's hard for me to believe that three years have passed since we did our first album because we've been so busy touring and working on these songs on an almost daily basis since then. And I imagine we could have just kept going and going, but at some point you realize you've got to stop what you're doing, go in the studio and create something new for the fans to listen to.

HP: Is there one song on the album that stands out for you?

MT: For me it's **Blackbird**, which was written for a friend of mine who died of cancer last year. It's a song that's in contrast to a lot of the material on this album because it's very uplifting. Many of the other songs on the album have a bit of a darker feel to them. But I think that Mark would agree that when we completed **Blackbird** there was a sense of fulfillment that everyone in the band seemed to share.

MT: I think **Blackbird** is not just the best song Alter Bridge has ever done, it's the best song that I've ever been associated with in my entire life. That's how proud we all are of it. That's why we named the album after it. I have a feeling that no matter how many years this band may be around, and how many albums we may record, this is one of the songs that people will remember us by.

HP: We know you left your former label before this album came out. Why?

MT: Sometimes it's just time to move on and try something new. I had been associated with that label for a long time—from the start of Creed through the release of the first Alter Bridge album. Sometimes you just need to gain a fresh perspective on things. When we started to talk to the people at our new label, their enthusiasm for what we were doing was infectious. It filled us with confidence and a sense that we could accomplish everything that we wanted. It was a great feeling to have.

HP: We had heard that your former label was still hoping for a Creed reunion. Is that true?

MT: I think they understood that something like that was not going to happen. It had just reached a point in Creed where Scott (Stapp) was someplace else from the rest of us. That wasn't going to change. I came to the realization quite a while ago that Creed was behind me and Alter Bridge was ahead of me. If some other people couldn't quite make that leap it really isn't my fault. There's really no point in rehashing all of that. Let's just say that we're incredibly happy with where we are at the moment, and that's all that really matters.

HP: How much of **Blackbird** do you expect to incorporate into your new stage show?

MT: If we could, we'd play *everything* from this album. The songs are just so much fun to play, and we really believe that they reflect us as a band better than the things we did before. We'll probably keep about four songs from **One Day Remains** in the set, and the rest will all be from **Blackbird**. With Myles now playing guitar on stage there's a depth to what we're doing that's quite impressive... even if I do have to say so myself.

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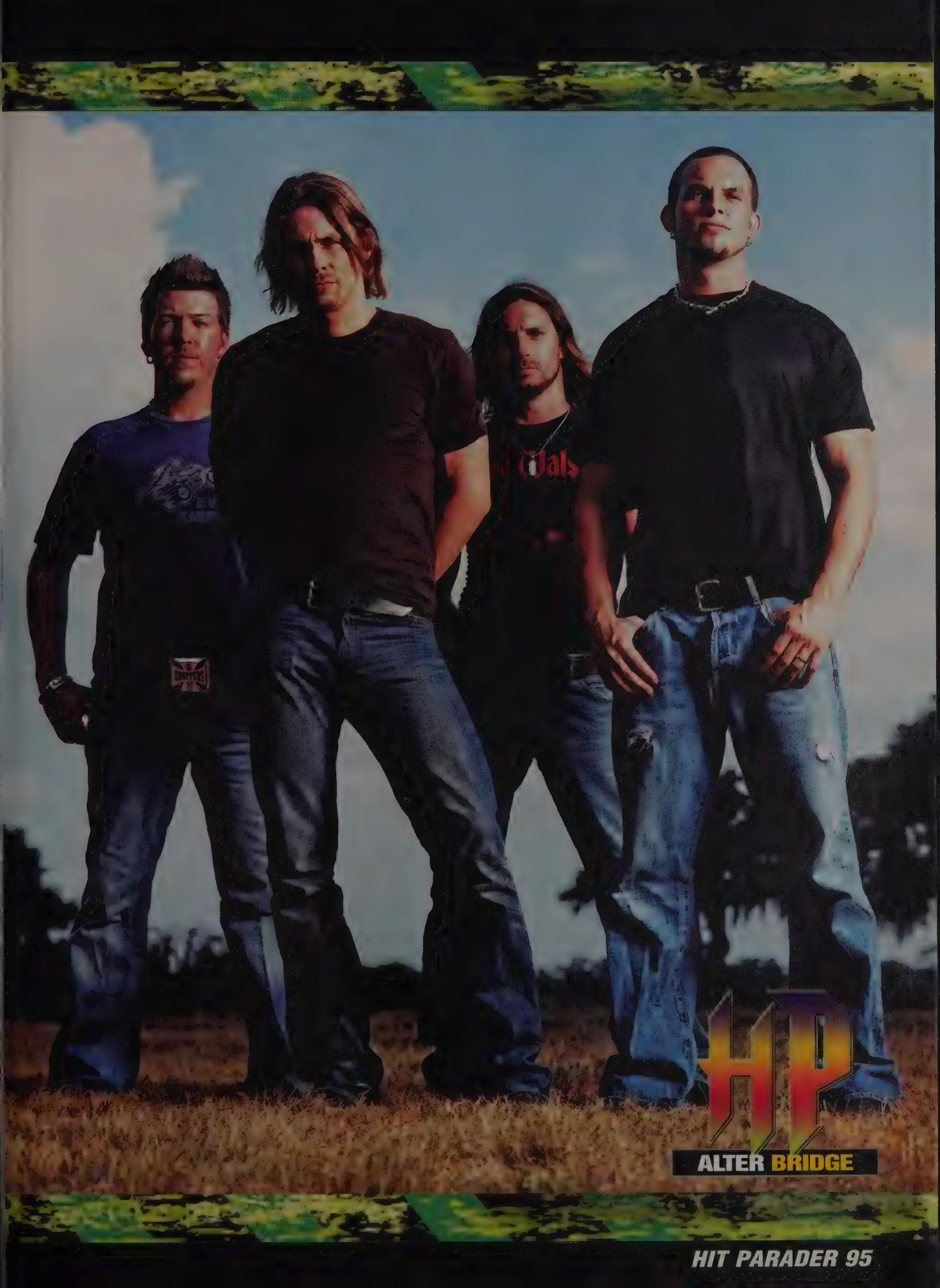
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HIT PARADE

ALTER BRIDGE

HIT PARADE 95

IBANEZ

If you thought 7-string guitars were cool, there's news that may really blow you away, from Ibanez—long one of this column's favorite guitar-makers (and bass-makers, and effects-makers...) for its relentless dedication to combining hot sounds and hot looks with innovation and value. Among its many innovations, in 1990 Ibanez asked "how low can you go?" when it pioneered full-production 7-string guitars, with its Universe model. Ibanez worked with guitar legend Steve Vai on the Universe, and intended it as an extended-range prog-shred soloist's axe; "more is better" was Vai's answer at the time to the "why 7 strings?" questions. Over time, of course, nu-metal titans Korn, Limp Bizkit and others gave the 7-string a new, and very different life, as a rhythm-guitar/bass hybrid for extra-thick low-end crunch.

But the fact remains that Ibanez was ahead of the 7-string curve. So it's fitting that Ibanez is first to take the next logical leap forward, re-defining just how low guitars can go with the first-ever mass-produced solid-body electric EIGHT-string guitar. Like the 7-string with its jazz hollow-body baritone-guitar ancestors, the 8-string has some forgotten acoustic forebears in the form of 8-string classical guitars, which also use the extra two strings to extend the low end. But just as a solid-body electric 7-string designed for rock became a whole new revolutionary beast, so it is with the 8-string, which Ibanez was inspired to mass-produce by Fredrik Thordenahl and Marten Hagstrom of Sweden's Meshuggah, who play custom Ibanez 8-strings with the 8th string tuned to a low F.



Korn's James "Munky" Shaffer and Texas shred-virtuoso Rusty Cooley also used Ibanez 8-strings, with Cooley the exception to the rule - upholding the Vai 7-string tradition, he uses one extra bass string and one extra treble string.

The production-model Ibanez 8-string is a member of the very popular RG family, RG2228GK being the exact model number. It's got a 5-piece Wizard 8 Prestige neck with jumbo frets, on a resonant basswood body fitted with two EMG 808 active-electronic pickups, and a Fixed Edge III-8 bridge. Oh how we wish we could use the word "low" for the price, but in all honesty, at \$1,999 list including hardshell case the RG2228GK is certainly not over-priced.

And Ibanez hasn't forgotten the 7-strings either - bringing back by popular demand one of its classic 7-string models, the sleek and slender S-series S7320BK, with a 5-piece Wizard II-7 jumbo-fretted neck on a mahogany body, and two Ibanez IBZ AH pickups (an AH 1-7 at the neck and an AH2-7 at the bridge), plus a ZR Zero Resistance double-locking tremolo bridge. At \$933.32 list this one IS the sort of outrageous bargain

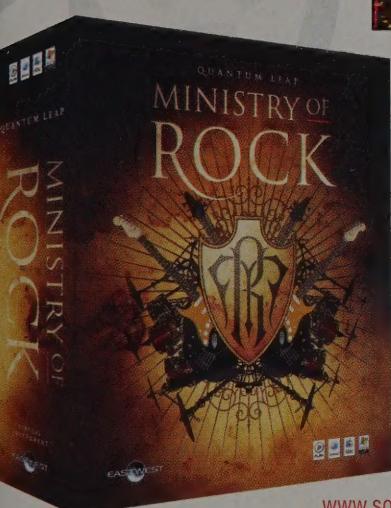
we've come to expect from Ibanez. And can you guess how long it's been since the S7320BK was part of the Ibanez line-up? That's right: seven years. Hey folks, it had to happen!

For more info on these and the many, many other Ibanez guitars, basses, amps and effects, head online to www.ibanez.com.



PLANET WAVES DARE STRAP

Love playing guitar but finding it a pain in the neck? The new Dare Strap from Planet Waves is designed to help players suffering from the sort of back and/or neck problems that extra-heavy instruments can cause or worsen. Names for its designed Troy Dare, the strap takes the potentially revolutionary step of spreading the instrument's weight over both shoulders, instead of causing disproportionate stress by hanging it off of one shoulder. The Dare Strap could be a double-barreled bonus for many players, lightening the load and offering instant relief. The price tag for that innovation's not too heavy, either, at \$24.99. For more info on the Dare Strap and the many other accessories Planet Waves has to offer, check out www.planetwaves.com online.



EASTWEST QUANTUM LEAP MINISTRY OF ROCK

The new Quantum Leap Ministry of Rock, from sample kings Eastwest, is so impressive it's literally scary. Here is a device that, for \$549 suggested retail, contains a huge 18 gigabyte collection of rock guitars, basses and drums recorded at the legendary Eastwest Studio 2 in L.A. (home to more gold and platinum records than any other studio in the world, by a mind-bending list of artists, from Frank Sinatra and Bob Dylan to Rage Against the Machine and System of a Down). Here in this up-to-date toolkit for producers and anyone else who might have a use for its thoroughly modern goodies, you'll find Fender Telecaster and

Strat, Les Paul Gibson, Ibanez Universe 7 and various PRS guitars all recorded through Marshall, Fender, Bogner, Vox ad Budda amps; Fender Precision, Fender-5, Specter and Kubiki basses recorded through an Ampeg

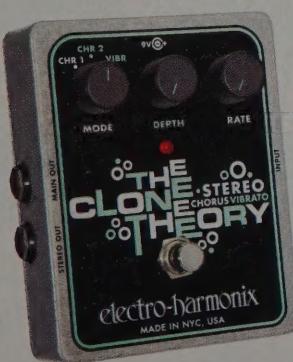
SVT and an Ashdown rig; and drum kits ranging from a Ludwig 9-tom Octupus to Ayotte and the Gretsch kit Lars Ulrich played on Metallica's "Black" album...all with articulations and programming reverse-engineered from actual performances at one of the world's renowned temples of sound - including drum hits extracted from live playing, which in all available kits are also optimized for use with Roland V-Drums. There are legato bass and guitar samples, legato and staccato repetitions, clean and distorted lead and rhythm samples...Will it make live musicians a thing of the past? At that price, it's frighteningly possible! For more info on the Ministry of Rock and Eastwest's many other dumbfounding sample packages, visit

www.soundsonline.com.



ELECTRO-HARMONIX ANALOG MODULATORS

Electro-Harmonix, one of the great names in effects devices, has three new analog stereo modulators which it calls nothing less than "amazing" - and with their track record, going all the way back to the legendary Big Muff fuzztone among other classics, we take that description seriously. The Stereo Polyphase is a phase-shifter deluxe providing cascading sweeps and gorgeous, panoramic stereo-output imaging, with user-defined stop and start ranges and optical circuitry for wide dynamic range usable on hot-output instruments like keyboards, plus switch-selectable LFO, envelope follower and expression pedal control. The Stereo Pulsar creates strikingly graceful and sensual tremolo and panning effects, with switchable vintage triangle or square waves, adjustable pulse width and controllable transitions from negative to positive sawtooth waves. And the Stereo Clone Theory is an eclectic upgrade to the vintage Clone Theory chorus, whose analog chorus and vibrato effects are both lush and sharply defined, and can literally envelope your listeners through the stereo outputs. For more on these and EH's many other effects units, go to www.ehx.com online.



GAMES & GEAR

THE DRUM BEAT

SABIAN

Sabian has introduced a new limited edition ride cymbal named for and developed with one of rock's drumming legends: Carmine Appice, who's been the power behind such living legends as Ozzy Osbourne, Jeff Beck and Rod Stewart. The Carmine Appice Vintage Ride is a 22-inch medium-heavy, low-profile beauty, hand-hammered of Sabian's B20 bronze, with a vintage-style bell (same size as the popular Raw Bell Dry Ride) and fully lathed in traditional wide-lathe style. It's got a clean stick sound and a rich, dark overall sound; as Appice himself says, "I like darker-sounding cymbals that add power by becoming part of the music, rather than simply cutting through it." Wise words well worth heeding, on a wonderful cymbal well worth hearing - which could be a challenge as they only made 200 of 'em! For more info on this and Sabian's many other cymbals, head to www.sabian.com online.



ZILDJIAN

Zildjian, another great name in cymbals, has been around for centuries - longer than any other current major cymbal company - yet it's taken til now to name a cymbal line after the patriarch who helped guide the firm into the 21st century. The new Armand Zildjian Series is part of the "A Zildjian" range but with its own unique characteristics: lighter weights and lower profiles give it an overall warmer and smoother sound, with lower-pitched overtones, strong projection, faster response and a unique feel thanks to tighter top-side lathe patterns. The series was inspired by the 19-inch Armand "Beautiful Baby" ride, with its three-rivet cluster; new models include sweet 'n' shimmery medium-thin 20 and 21-inch Rides with large cups, 16 and 18-inch extra-fast Thin and more-robust Medium Thin Crashes, a paper-thin 10-inch Splash, and 13 and 14-inch hi-hats. For more on these and Zildjian's enormous range of other cymbals, gongs etc., check out www.zildjian.com.

MAPEX

Finally, Mapex has five new drum thrones from which to hit those cymbals (and drums). The top-of-the-line T755A (\$199.99 list) and T750A (\$168.99) have thickly padded seats and durable soft-vinyl seat-covers., with the 755A sporting a 17-inch wide, 4-inch thick saddle-style seat and the 750A a 4-inch thick 14-inch diameter round seat; threaded-steel rod-and-collar tube mechanisms allow 18 to 26-inch height range adjustment for both, with die-cast memory locks, plus double-braced "natural curve" legs for added comfort and stability. The midrange saddle-style T575A (\$163.99) and round-seat T570A (\$139.99) also have soft-vinyl 4-inch thick seats and double-braced "natural curve" legs, plus 16 to 24-inch height-adjustment with dual steel tube and thumbscrew plus die-cast memory lock. And the student-level T270A (\$79.99) has a 12-inch diameter, 2.5 inch thick round seat, 6-position keyway rock with stop-lock nut for 17 to 22-inch height adjustment, and double-braced legs. All are covered by Mapex's 5-year warranty. For more on Mapex thrones, drums and other hardware, visit www.mapexdrums.com.





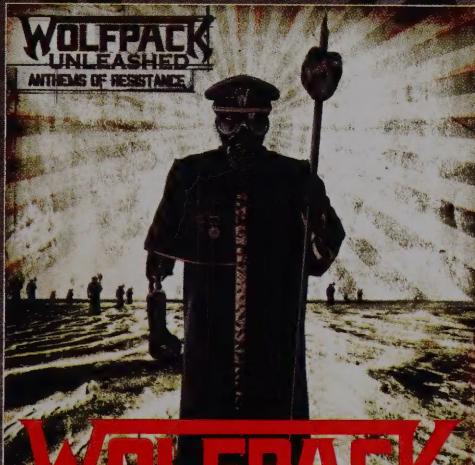
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